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HISTORIC THEORIES OF ATONEMENT

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HISTORIC THEORIES OF ATONEMENT

WITH COMMENTS

BY

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PREFACE

For six years now it has been my privilege to lecture on the History of the Christian Doctrine of Atonement—much the most interesting and satisfying piece of theological teaching that has ever been entrusted to me. One began with extreme dependence on Ritschl, and considerable indebtedness to Baur, rather overlooking the important historical material contained in Stevens' *Christian Doctrine of Salvation.* Recently, however, there has been quite a crop of notable books dealing with our subject, and offering light from different quarters. The Abbé Rivière has followed up his *Œuvre Historique* — translated into two English volumes—with an *Œuvre Théologique* which adds not a little fresh historical matter. The Rev. J. K. Mozley's contribution to the *Studies in Theology* represents an Anglicanism without narrowness, and reveals a powerful Christian mind. An equally telling manifesto emanating

from Presbyterianism is furnished by Denney's posthumous volume; while Principal R. S. Franks' *History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ* is an honour to Congregationalism. Were dedications in fashion, I ought to dedicate my chapters to these writers, and especially to the last named. They not merely helped a lecturer in his task but impelled him to take pen in hand. I feel bound to add that it is not always easy to accept Dr. Franks' groupings. Even after careful study, the various "syntheses" which he recognizes at different stages in the history of thought remain to me less clear than I could wish.

Dean Rashdall's very learned and very unsatisfying *Bampton Lectures*, and Principal Grensted's *Short History*, did not appear in print till my MS. was complete.

The opening chapter is meant to announce a point of view, unsupported here by argument. Ultimately, as I believe, every Christian mind must accept a similar point of view, combining as it does the idealism of Christianity, in virtue of which Christians confess that the world's salvation has not to be gained by human effort in days to come, but to be received from God,

with a Christian realism, according to which it is not the mere existence of God that so saves, nor even the eternal purpose of His Fatherly love, but rather the fact of Christ in human history, and supremely those final sufferings in which He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness."

In our study generally it has been inevitable that more attention should be paid to clear-cut theories than to vague and obscure views, even if the latter might seem nearer to the centre of truth. Not only does the scheme of the book force us to this preference. The very nature of intellectual inquiry seems to carry with it the same necessity. If, then, nothing is said about other doctrines, though enunciated by theologians of deserved authority—*e.g.* those doctrines which affirm that, while not inflicting punishment, God "judged sin" in the death of Christ—the reason is that the author has been unable to understand their meaning.

Several of these chapters, with not inconsiderable omissions, have already appeared in the *Expositor*.

I owe a very special acknowledgment to the

old and tried friendship of the Rev. W. Hope Davison, M.A., who has kindly undertaken to see this volume through the press while I am in America on the occasion of this year's International Congregational Council.

If our review of theories can at all help Christian thought—better still, if it may in the least degree minister to Christian life—I shall bless God for honouring me so far as that.

R. M.

MANCHESTER,
4th June 1920.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction—The Moral Necessity of Atonement

I

When we put faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ we express our assurance that history counts in the final issue of things. Man's salvation is an act of God Most High. There was a long period during which human salvation had not been accomplished. There came an hour at which it could truly be said, "It is finished," and what was true then is true now and forevermore. We smile to-day at the childlike fashion of conceiving this truth found in the fancy—sanctioned by no Church authority—of the "Harrowing of Hades." According to that myth-like fable, none of the friends of God could enjoy true blessedness after death until the Redeemer of mankind paid a brief visit to the dreary underworld, and rose again, bringing His ransomed ones with Him. We may smile, too, at the desperately unhistorical

thesis of patristic and mediæval theology, or of the theology of old-fashioned Protestantism, that believers under the first covenant consciously looked forward to the atoning work of Jesus Christ, just as we consciously look back to it; that the work was historical, but its religious value consistently supra-historical. Yet, while we smile at blundering efforts to cut the knot, let us recognize that it may prove no easy matter to untie it by vindicating for reflection the instinctive feeling of the Christian consciousness. Our redemption is no mere complex of ideas. It is a fact in history; the central fact of all that long story. And we must be on our guard as Christians against the tyranny of several types of idealist philosophy, which sterilize such belief at the outset. Loyalty or disloyalty to the great fact means life or means death to Christian faith. Not a few so-called theories of Atonement are evasions or denials of the fact itself.

Assuming, then, the view of history as not merely a divine manifestation but a divine activity, we proceed to emphasize several elements in the doctrine of Atonement.

First, we are saved, specifically and emphatically, by the sufferings and death of Christ. Certainly there will be few or none to-day who will seek to separate the death of Christ from

the life which it crowned. The "imputation of Christ's active obedience" is a desperately scholastic fashion of asserting the connexion between the death and the antecedent life; yet, however obsolete its terms of thought or of expression, it points to a truth. The death does not save us without the life. It is the death of *Jesus Christ* that saves; the death of Him who had shown Himself to be what we mean by Jesus Christ; dare we add it?—who had *become* Jesus Christ amid the sufferings and temptations of His life before that hour, when as a merciful and faithful high-priest He undertook the supreme task of dying. But we must affirm with at least equal emphasis the counter-proposition, that the life does not save us apart from the death. If either can be passed over in a brief statement of Christian facts, the death cannot be omitted and the life may. For it was given to Christ to embody in that supreme sacrifice all that His life meant, of love to man and of filial faithfulness towards God.

Secondly: the death of Christ is known by Christians as procuring for us or conveying to us or assuring us of the forgiveness of our sins; and this is the primary gift of God—the first and, in a sense, the greatest and most wonderful thing included in salvation. *How* the death of Christ is related to man's forgiveness may

perplex us. Perhaps our Lord's death procures forgiveness. Perhaps it conveys forgiveness. Perhaps it rather assures us—giving us moral warrant, even at the moment when we confess our sins, to believe in the forgiveness of God. Or perhaps several of these expressions may be justified. Or quite different expressions may do better service in interpreting God to men. But, even if the effort at definition should result in failure—even if we must endure the jeers of those who are content with some plausible and glib formula that cannot long content either mind or heart or conscience —we will not waver in the confession, though made perhaps half blindly, that in Christ we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins. There may indeed be another thing in regard to which our thought must grow riper. There may be something to learn as to what forgiveness means. Is it just the remission of penalties? Does it always include such remission? Or is the essence of forgiveness rather restoration to God's friendship? Can that friendship, then, ever be interrupted? And, if interrupted, can it ever possibly be reknit? Christian faith is sure of its answer. Sin does separate from God. Christ by His death does reconcile.

Thirdly: the cross of Christ is held to be

not merely the means of forgiveness but also the fountain-head of the new life. If we must say, with the child's hymn, "He died that we might be forgiven," we must continue with it, in the next breath, "He died to make us good." And these two great benefits, however closely knit together, and however inseparable one from the other in experience, must be regarded (*pace* Dr. Denney) as two things and not as one. Nor shall we be loyal either to the teaching of the New Testament or to the facts of Christian experience if we lay exclusive emphasis upon forgiveness, or seek to explain the redemption of human character by some other power than the grace of the suffering Saviour. Should we say that—the constitutional barrier of sin being once removed—the goodwill of God flows out freely towards us, or that His omnipotence rescues us and terminates our state of almost utter helplessness, or that the Holy Spirit supplements *within* us the work of Christ *for* us—it is all true, and yet it is all incomplete. Christ died for us; we bless God for that great love. But also, we died with Christ. Somehow—for these are mysterious things—somehow, we say, He has broken the evil spell and won the decisive victory, which loyal faith inherits and shares.

A very great problem arises here; perhaps it will be among the last to be solved by Christian thought. How are we to adjust to each other these two achievements of the saving love of Christ? They stand in no relation whatever; so says Protestant orthodoxy. Our task—our necessary task, and the whole of our task—is to "distinguish" between "justification and sanctification." Albrecht Ritschl, when his restatement has formulated in its own fashion the elements of the Christian salvation, seems to hold a similar view. There is an "ellipse" with two "foci." We must "distinguish" steadily between "morality and religion." Dr. Denney, again, thinks that there is no problem at all. That imperious theologian reminds a reader constantly of the Gladstonian temperament and temper—so preternaturally clear in seeing what it sees; so impatiently contemptuous of those who dare to observe anything which the Master-mind had not detected. Are we to subordinate forgiveness to renewal? Is God's forgiveness doled out by Christ in proportion as—with spiritual or sacramental assistance—we make ourselves worthier? God forbid that we should say that! Yet many have said it, and not a few say it still to-day. For that is the teaching of legalism, the age-long enemy of evangelicalism;

traitor to the gospel of the grace of God; seeking to rob the redeemed of that wonderful thing, God's free forgiveness.

II

The terms which theology employs in handling this great mystery call in their turn for a brief preliminary survey. We deal with them as they occur in the English language, in the English Bible, and in English theology. For most of us think in English. There may be those who have the capacity of thinking in Greek or Hebrew, or—if one dare add it—in German. But such are few. And it may be that they lose more than they gain by partial estrangement from their mother-tongue.

"Atonement" is the technical term in the English-speaking world. It has its Biblical justification less from its single occurrence[1] in the unrevised English New Testament, when the word as used in A.V. means "reconciliation," than from the sacrificial law of the Old Testament. Yet we cannot go back to the Old Testament law for a precise definition of what Christian thought means by Atonement. Theology is in need of a term which will include (3) as well as (2)—which will connect with the

[1] Rom. v. 11.

death of Christ not alone the forgiveness of sins, but also the new life in the soul of man and in the race, and which will recognize that the connexion is direct. Usage gives us the technical term Atonement not exactly as a synonym for redemption, but as the precise expression of the work (and sufferings) of Jesus Christ whereby mankind is redeemed. To theological and religious usage, then, we must look for the sense of our term; not to the letter of scripture; least of all—would we ascertain it—to etymology.

"Redemption" is the commonest Biblical term for the Christian salvation, and perhaps the widest in its sweep. It is also the vaguest. French theology predominantly speaks of the doctrine of "redemption" when we say Atonement. Our own language, within its manifold contributory streams, tends to differentiate the Romance term "ransom" from the more fully Latinized "redemption." Such desynonymization may sometimes prove a valuable means of scientific accuracy; but it is not without its dangers. The assertion by such means of a distinction in thought is, and remains, purely local, purely English. In other languages, even in those of the Bible, "redemption" has something of a tendency to carry with it the associations of our word "ransom." And,

although the tendency has been latent for generations, it may revive at any moment. The observation has been made that, in the Old Testament, the word redemption speedily drops the connotation in question—ceases to imply any reference to ransom or price—becomes purely a synonym for deliverance. It has also been observed that, in the Old Testament world of thought, redemption almost invariably means deliverance from oppression or sorrow, and only once—in Ps. cxxx.—stands definitely for rescue from sin. The New Testament often speaks similarly. There are passages in it where "redemption" coincides exactly with the thought of deliverance as such, though a deliverance from *sin*; and from sin under two aspects—as guilt, and as bondage. Frequently, however, the thought of "ransom" begins to be reinstated by the New Testament writer. A price has been paid. We have been set free at great cost. We are under the profoundest obligation to the love of Him who gave Himself for us. In spite of some curious hints in Old Testament and in New, the further stage remains for certain ill-balanced forms of Christian theology, when the metaphor is more fully reconstituted, and it is taught —by some of the greatest names on the roll of Christian theology — that the price of

our redemption was paid by Christ to the Evil One.

Expiation is a Pagan term. It tends to confine itself narrowly to pardon, in contrast with renewal—perhaps, even more narrowly, to that which has made pardon *possible*. Only once, by a kind of freak, does the word find its way into the English Bible.[1] It is of interest to observe the added connotation which still survives for our modern minds, viz., that *punishment* may "expiate" crime. This faint connotation foreshadows that penal theory of the work of Christ which is found at least in the letter of some very weighty passages of Old Testament and New, and which has played so great a rôle in theology, mainly—but by no means exclusively—under Protestantism.

Reconciliation, as we shall note hereafter, is one of the contributions to our doctrine of St. Paul's many-sided thinking. In modern times, it stands as the recognized technical term for the doctrine in German theology. Dr. Denney assumes it as his starting-point—quite as a matter of course, or a thing self-evident—in his posthumous volume; a precious legacy to us from its fullness of interest, of learning, of power, and from the ripeness and depth of its

[1] Num. xxxv. 33 marg.: the blood of the murderer must "expiate" the blood of murder.

Christian piety. But we cannot afford to let assumptions pass unexamined even when they are put forward by genius and goodness. It seems unquestionable, if the New Testament is to guide us, that "redemption" is an even more central and even more normative conception. St. Paul himself falls into line when we survey his vocabulary as a whole. Moreover, the word "reconciliation" carries with it notable ambiguities. Does it imply a change of mind in God? Or only in us? St. Paul speaks of "God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself"; nor does the New Testament anywhere speak of Christ's reconciling God to us. Yet reconciliation naturally means that two, who were estranged, come together again in virtue of an inner change which takes place in both. And it is doubtful whether St. Paul's definition of the term, if we had it explicitly formulated, would satisfy a Westcott or a Ritschl. Again, does reconciliation on our part imply simply the abandonment of guilty fear and unholy distrust of God, or does it further involve the positive acceptance of God's ideals? Which does the word mean—in Scripture? In theology? Is the word unambiguous in its clear human reference, or does ambiguity still cleave to it? Does it live entirely in the thought of pardon? Or does

it contain, concentrated within itself, that two-foldness of the Christian salvation which groups together forgiveness and renewal, deliverance from the "guilt" of sin and from its "power"? It is at least possible that certain distinguished theologians have slurred these questions, thus making their task easier for the moment but in the end unfruitful. At the same time, no attempt is made here to deny that the term (once it has been clearly defined) is a precious addition to the armoury of Christian thought.

Propitiation is another term borrowed from the vocabulary of Paganism. When the term enters the Bible world of thought, it does not bring with it all its old associations. Neither Old Testament nor New ever tells us that animal sin-offerings remove the divine anger. More than this, modern theology insists, quite fairly, that the propitiation of God is nowhere spoken of in Scripture. By a strange transition, the language of the Bible comes to speak of propitiating "sins." Yet, over against this negative fact, stands the positive fact that Christ is repeatedly described as "the propitiation for our sins"; and, when the meaning is clear in the New Testament writer's mind, the affirmation would appear to be that *Christ* is an acceptable *sin-offering*. Certain schools of Christian theology have been daring enough to

define still more fully, and to affirm that Christ endured, and by enduring appeased, the wrath of God. This affirmation is woven into the penal theory — naturally enough, if hardly necessarily. But we find it repeated, at least in phrase, by so tender and devout a spirit as John M'Leod Campbell. And it constitutes the central essence of the late Dr. D. W. Simon's effort to expound Atonement in terms of personal relationships.

III

The moral necessity of Atonement is guaranteed to the Christian heart by the fact that Christ has died. Some minds indeed, even independently of this, discover an avenue of approach in their own bitter experiences of sin, or—less securely—in well-verified moral postulates. But, if one's postulates are obscure and one's experience is defective, one finds oneself none the less faced by the tremendous fact of Christ's cross. St. Paul is a soul rich in postulates and rich in the most terrible as well as in the most blessed of experiences. But as a last resource he points us to the fact. Christ has died. Did Christ die "for nought"[1]—idly, superfluously? There for St. Paul is found

[1] Gal. ii. 21.

the ultimate *reductio ad absurdum* of a theology without a thought of atonement. We are faced by a sharp dilemma. Either Christ died needlessly, in a tragic extravagance of suffering, or Christ died of moral necessity. What the moral necessity may be, and how the death of Christ meets it—these are questions as difficult as they are urgent. Not only the humble productions of present-day theology but centuries of Christian thought have sought to reach some at least partially satisfying answer. Many errors have been committed by the way. Something, we trust, has been learned. But, succeed or fail, we must try our utmost; until man ceases to have a mind and a conscience, or until the sun of our Gospel day sets in the darkness of final despair. Apart from such disastrous victories of unreason or unbelief, we must desire, like the angels of God, to "look into" the sacred mystery of Christ's cross.

It deserves to be noted that the assertion of moral necessity is practically equivalent to asserting an assured fact. Any alleged act in history which is meaningless stands in danger of being dismissed as incredible. One says, "Christ died for us." A second adds, "Yes, He died for us, but there was no need that He should die." It will not be long before a third voice is heard, in crushing logic or in irresistible

mockery, crying, "I don't believe that He died for us at all." It is true, the bare fact of Jesus' death on the cross will remain with us. Fanatics of the Rationalist Press may deny it—those strange light-armed skirmishers of unbelief; stranger far, a few ill-balanced Christian minds may echo the same denial; minds engrossed in the Christ idea and indifferent to the Christ fact. Apart from such exhibitions of caprice and prejudice the execution of our Lord remains among the external historical certainties. But not precisely the fact of Atonement! Not the fact that, in dying, Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself! That will only be asserted by those who perceive, in clear vision or in dim, that a moral necessity underlay the tragedy of Calvary; so that Gentile cruelty did but carry into effect "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

It may further be true that the affirmation of moral necessity may pass blamelessly into the less emphatic assertion of high moral expediency or seemliness. Between the position "It was needful[1] that Christ should suffer" and the position "It became the God of all to make the pioneer of our salvation perfect through sufferings"[2] there is no discord.

[1] Luke xxiv. 26 says nothing less than this. [2] Heb. ii. 10.

Reverence, in or outside the Bible, may sometimes lead to a preference for the less challenging form of affirmation. Nevertheless, in other cases, the denial of moral necessity may be actuated by the lack of real Christian faith. And, while both are legitimate utterances of faith in the God of salvation, the affirmation of *necessity* is, we believe, more adequate to the facts and more instructive for the Christian mind.

It may further be true that the assertion of a "need be" for atonement—as John M'Leod Campbell styles it—is incomplete and, by itself, unsatisfying. Nor can we wonder if the impatient mind of Harnack speaks with contempt of such assertions of an undefined necessity.[1] Yet, however slight an instalment of theological wisdom it may be, to affirm necessity in Christ's death is something; it is a beginning. Notably, this affirmation plays its part—with Anselm, with Campbell, with Dale, and doubtless with many others—in criticism of moral-influence theories. The most vulnerable point in these latter is just this, that they are unable to indicate any necessity for Christ's dying. Hence they appear to be suicidal theories.

[1] Harnack's own attempt at a positive construction is singularly unsatisfying (see Essay V. in *The Atonement and Modern Religious Thought*). But it is always easier to criticize than to construct.

They confidently undertake to destroy the great affirmation of an "objective" need for Atonement. But they fail to observe that the "subjective" impressiveness of suffering and dying "for others" disappears, if death and if suffering were needless.[1]

We may repeat the familiar criticism under two images. One must be apologized for because of its homeliness. Garments hang for safe keeping upon a peg. They may be rich and costly fabrics, and the peg which supports them may be plain metal or plainest wood; yet, if you value the garments, the peg also is important in your eyes. Should it be withdrawn, the delicate tissues must fall down in a dusty heap upon the floor. Just so we may conceive the relation between moral necessity of atonement in Christ's death, and commendation to us by that death of the love of God. There is no real exhibition of love unless the suffering through which love expresses itself was needful. But, if really needful *on whatever score*, willingly accepted suffering becomes a glorious, an appealing, a commanding, a heroic thing. Wise friends of the subjective appeal of Atonement will therefore surely prize some

[1] It appears from Principal Franks' *History* to be quite a staple assertion of mediæval Catholicism, that superfluous suffering "for us" binds us to deeper gratitude. What logic! And what taste!

theory—imperfect perhaps, or ill defined—yet *some* theory of objective necessity for Atonement. Their interest may be chiefly in the love which God displays. Who has a moral right to be indifferent to the thought of the suffering love of God? But, when there is no need for love to express itself in suffering, is that which suffers love, or is it folly?

None the less, one must doubt whether the relation of clothes and peg, were it as dignified as it is unfortunately the reverse, could be a fitting parable of an Atonement whose suffering commends to us God's love. We cannot be satisfied to affirm a *legal* necessity for pain undertaken and endured by the *moral* excellence of redeeming love; nor yet an *antecedent* necessity for suffering, leading up to a *subsequent* display of mercy. There must be moral necessity for that which is undertaken and achieved by God's supreme moral goodness. The beginning and the end of Atonement must be of the same high quality. Clothes and peg are disparate things; mercy and justice—if justice is the right word here—are alike divine. For justice is the first manifestation to us of what God is; while mercy, as is so truly affirmed in *Ecce Homo*, is "a riper justice."

The other image we have in mind more

nearly repeats the criticisms of subjectivism formulated by the great champions of the objective doctrine. Let us picture to ourselves two friends watching a torrent roaring by in dangerous flood. The younger and weaker man takes a careless step, overbalances himself, and is carried away by the stream; the other instantly plunges in after him, and by a miracle of good fortune recovers his friend before he has been carried over the waterfall to certain death. But, as will sometimes happen, the wonderful escape is counterbalanced by a tremendous loss. The rescuer's strength is exhausted, and, when he is drawn out of the whirlpool, he is dead or dying. What else can the rescued one say but, in very literal terms, "He loved me and gave himself for me"? Or, if there had been estrangement; or if the survivor had wronged his friend; how must his heart be pierced by what has happened! How must his life be commanded henceforward by gratitude and repentance!

Had there been no necessity for the dear dead friend to incur danger, everything must show differently. It is difficult to imagine anything so stagey, indeed so insane, as a friend saying to his fellow, "I love you deeply! I must give you proof of it! And therefore for your sake I will risk everything by leaping into

this dangerous torrent." *For your sake*, he says; but the other is standing safely on the bank! What can the survivor think of so wasted a sacrifice? He can only say, with a pity half akin to contempt, "He died for nothing."—It was not so that Christ died.

Again, one thinks it unsatisfactory that the necessity for Atonement should be confined to the preliminary removal of some obstacle hindering man's salvation. Perhaps the most conspicuous example of such a theory is found in the doctrine of ransom paid to the devil. The rights and claims of that personage are conceived to be a real preliminary barrier. They had to be removed out of the way. They are met, and fully satisfied, in the death of Christ, whose readiness to pay this price constitutes a grand proof of love. By throwing the necessity out of the sphere of the divine nature and assigning it to the diabolic, this particular theology of atonement is freed from the awkwardness of maintaining that God both demands and supplies ransom. The theory, then, may have incidental intellectual advantages; but morally it remains grotesque and insufferable.

A more familiar example of such a theory is found in certain types of the penal doctrine. Christ satisfied, not the devil's claims, but those

of divine law and justice. Once this preliminary work was achieved, love had its unimpeded way. There is something good and true in such teaching. It is well to point to a probable or possible necessity, explaining the great fact of Christ's death. But we must conceive a more intimate connexion between the different elements of the Christian salvation, and between the different stages in its attainment. "*All* things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." The necessity for Atonement can neither be diabolic and undivine, nor yet legal and only half divine.

One may perhaps express the same point more clearly by saying that the necessity in our doctrine must articulate both ways — forwards as well as backwards. It may be natural to begin by asserting that the atoning death is necessarily presupposed by human salvation; but we must go on to add that the atoning death necessarily results in human salvation. The doctrine of Christ's merit, so awkwardly adjusted to the accompanying assertion of His sacrifice or satisfaction, is one attempt to work out a positive as well as negative doctrine of Atonement. Perhaps a more exact illustration—hardly one more satisfying to Christian judgment—is found in the

Calvinistic doctrine of the efficacy of redemption. Negatively, Christ's death was necessary for the ransom of the Elect. Positively, Christ's work unfailingly ensures the regeneration of the Elect, the perseverance in grace of the Elect, the eternal salvation of the Elect, and of course only of the Elect. In the end probably it will be found that the two-sided necessity for which we are pleading has no real justice done to it until we assert (3) as well as (2).[1] That Atonement necessarily secures that salvation to which it is necessary—this is not identical with the assertion that man's character as well as his standing is reconstituted by the passion of Christ. Yet the latter also is truth; and the latter truth safeguards the former. You cannot affirm that in Christ a new humanity is created unless you imply, in a true and worthy sense, the efficacy of redemption.

Once more if differently the question of the necessity, and positive necessity, of Atonement is raised, when we proceed to ask whether Atonement was a thing morally necessary for God Himself. Anselm's theology of Atonement distinctly includes that assertion. Protestant Evangelicalism almost invariably shrinks from it; recently, *e.g.*, Dr. Denney. And yet one cannot but hold that the statement expresses

[1] *Supra*, pp. 4 f.

a truth. As the Old Testament teaches, God forgives and saves [Israel] "for His own name's sake." As the New Testament proclaims, God is our Father; and again, God is love. The habitual tag of orthodoxy forty or fifty years since, that God "might justly" have left us to our ruin, is hardly to the point. God is just; we believe that to be profoundly true; but we do not adequately confess His name if we say, "God is justice," or even if we employ a synonym with loftier associations, and declare that "God is righteousness." Not even the further assertion that "God is loving" will suffice us—God *is love*. Therefore He would not have been true to His name—that name in which we trust—had He contented Himself with constitutional excuses for inaction. Atonement was necessary not merely in order that man might be truly man but that God might be God.

At the same time, one fully concurs with Dr. Denney up to a point. This is not the truth in which the Christian heart habitually lives. It will rather keep before it the other, logically the lower, sense of necessity in regard to Atonement—apart from this work and suffering of Christ's, I could not be saved. And there is the more need for keeping that thought in view, because, in the judgment of most

consciences, dogmatic Universalism is false to the mind of Christ. We may dare to make the assertion that God could not but redeem mankind. But we must not individualize the assertion. No one surely can dare to say, "God could not but redeem *me*." If any soul advances to such a height of presumption, the affirmation of adoring faith, "God could not but provide a Lamb for a sacrifice," readily collapses into the dogma of non-Christian enlightenment. No atonement was needed by so loving a God, and none has been wrought out. "To trace redemption to its ultimate root in the divine Fatherliness, and to regard that Fatherliness as leaving no room for the need of redemption, are altogether opposite apprehensions of the Grace of God."[1]

But, if we must not assert that we are universally saved *a priori*—saved if need be in spite of ourselves—still less can we reaffirm the dogma of a former orthodoxy, that we are all damned *a priori*. Mr. Mozley quotes with grave respect the translation of a German hymn:[2]

> Had Jesus never bled and died,
> Then what could thee and all betide
> But uttermost damnation?

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[1] Campbell, *Nature of the Atonement*, ed. v. p. xxi.

[2] One is not certain whether he absolutely endorses what he quotes.

Justice as well as mercy seems to vanish from God's universe if this is even a possible, even a thinkable, constitution of things. At its least and lowest, justice demands a chance —if only what is colloquially termed "a fighting chance." The orthodoxies of the past evaded that demand by alleging that Adam enjoyed a fair chance and forfeited eternal life for us as well as for himself. So that consequently—apart from electing grace, and from the redemption of God's elect by Jesus Christ—every soul of the human race since Adam is literally "damned into the world." It seems no great demand to present to the Father of mercies, if we ask that *that* shall not pass for truth! Apart from Christ, no hope for man or for the world; but, apart from Christ, not the condemnation due to wilful choice of evil where the best was possible. A moral necessity in God's moral world has nothing whatever to do with a cold immoral fate, however camouflaged by theological word-spinning about Adam and the Fall. Profane indifference to Christ and profane libelling of God are equally evil things. And both alike are reduced to silence when we stand before the Cross of Calvary. Christ died for us because His death was necessary as our only hope. Christ died for us because God is love.

CHAPTER II

Old Testament Preparation for the Doctrine

The antecedents of our doctrine within the Old Testament are to be found almost exclusively in Isa. liii. (more exactly, lii. 13–liii.). Other passages chime in by way of confirmation; but this is the master-light of all our seeing. When the New Testament tells us that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," or that "all things which are written concerning the Son of Man must—of moral necessity—be fulfilled," it requires intellectual audacity bordering on effrontery to contend that Isa. liii. was not in the speaker's or writer's mind. The great Suffering Servant passage, in which the Servant passages culminate and conclude, has its lyrical pendant in Ps. xxii., with weakened echoes elsewhere in the Psalter; and Ps. xxii. demonstrably and inevitably exerts great influence on the thought of the New Testament. Nevertheless, beautiful as it is, Ps. xxii. cannot be compared for wealth of theological and

religious ideas with Isa. liii., which it presupposes. It borrows some of the great thoughts of the chapter, and echoes them with living power and freshness; but it brings to light no original suggestions of its own, and makes no marked contribution, whether original or derivative, to a theology of Atonement.

Once the clue is given, the Old Testament lights up with suggestions of the great Christian belief. Notably, the thought (Isa. liii. 10), that such suffering as the chapter describes constitutes a real guilt-offering, warrants that typological interpretation of Old Testament law which has done much service to Christian theology, if at the cost of not a little extravagance. Yet historically one could hardly say that Old Testament ritual prepared the way for the Christian doctrine or led up directly towards it. Isa. liii. does both: inevitably prepares for the doctrine; inevitably leads the pious mind towards its reception.

Isa. liii. 10 has often been quoted as we have here adduced it, and by high authorities, critical as well as traditionalist. Yet it is fair to mention that other high authorities, including evangelicals as well as radical theologians, find it necessary to reconstruct the text at that point. And, in the course of their reconstruction, the great key-thought disappears. On any

view, indeed, Isa. liii. makes a notable contribution towards the understanding or the patient endurance of the "Problem of Suffering." But this master-thought, that the endurance of suffering is sacrificial, quite possibly comes from a degraded text. If so, we may seem to be indebted for the thought to accident rather than to inspiration. And yet, even upon that view, the phrase must be allowed considerable importance in the history of religious ideas. While the LXX has a divergent and corrupt text, our phrase manifestly stood in synagogue texts at the Christian era.

A bolder effort to escape this difficulty is made by some. They contend that Isa. liii. includes traces of the sacrificial idea independently of the disputed closing verses. But the assertion appears insecure. The lamb led to the slaughter (ver. 7) recalls Jer. xi. 13; but there was nothing sacrificial in Jeremiah's attitude; he made no "intercession for the transgressors" who wronged him. Quite the contrary; he overflows with that bitterness which too frequently marks the Old Testament. Nor can we rely on other precarious suggestions in the chapter.

We are on safer ground when we recall that Jesus and the apostles were not textual critics. To them the saying was simply and purely

Scripture. For the Master at any rate we may claim that His devout study of the Old Testament stood above and not below that plane of things upon which scientific study of the Bible pursues its necessary and not unfruitful task. If that be true, we may acknowledge that divine Providence so ordered things that the mind of our Lord should harbour this great thought, undistracted by scientific hesitations. It is fair to add that such devout recognition of the working of God's purpose, by means even of accident and human error, is the less satisfying conception of man's co-operation with God's goodwill. Truth, and knowledge of the truth, serve the divine purpose in richer measure. Yet we must be content if we can recognize that, in any fashion, God is fulfilling Himself and revealing His great thoughts to mankind. It may be fair still further to add that study of the New Testament shows us other lines of approach, besides this highway of Isa. liii., from the Old Testament to the great Christian faith in Atonement. There are other exegetical arguments which lead up to recognition of Christ's sacrifice.

Laying aside this question, as to the sacrificial interpretation of innocent suffering, let us ask what is the general teaching of Isa. liii. We cannot pretend to regard the passage as

Messianic; *i.e.* it is certainly not connected, in the mind of its Old Testament author or editors, with the thought of the hoped-for royal deliverer. It may refer to some great if obscure figure in the religious history of Israel, "typically" foreshadowing One far greater. But more probably the Jews are right, and the passage primarily describes Israel's sufferings, Israel's righteousness, Israel's final victory. Until a generation ago, Christian theology loved to insist upon a qualification; it was the devout kernel of Israel who foreshadowed the Christ. In a sense, by their sufferings they rescued first the nation at large, then all mankind. To-day, criticism inclines to cut away those passages which speak of a moral task assigned to the Servant within Israel. This would leave only a Gentile world to be redeemed by vicarious pain. It is Israel then, our scholars tell us, who suffers and redeems; doubtless an idealized Israel, yet recognizably Israel and no other. Dr. Peake adds, that the details of the picture suit an individual as they cannot possibly suit a community or nation. Perhaps one might add a comment of a rather different order. It is easier for the Christian heart to accept the attribution of such moral praise, of such spiritual glory, to a fellowship or community of God's saints rather than to any

individual figure—He alone excepted, to whom such homage ultimately and eternally belongs.

Man, or group, or nation; earlier in Old Testament history, or late as late can be; the martyr who is here described to us is a redemptive figure. *The suffering of innocence redeems*—that is, in few words, the gist of the passage; that is the underlying moral principle to which it appeals; whether we include our tenth verse in this reckoning or throw it out. Presumably we may add, that the redemptive power operates for the benefit of those who are in some sort of moral touch with the sufferer. The prophecy would not say—as a good if eccentric Presbyterian minister urged, forty years ago, upon a fellow-student of the present writer's—that salvation would be possible for us if we had "evidence that an adequate atonement for sin had been offered *upon the planet Mars.*" Still, the chapter lays no stress upon the condition of moral fellowship as necessary to redemption. Persecutors are reduced to shame by discovering their own guilt, their own malignant misjudgment of the Sufferer's perfect purity. But the theology of Atonement is not so far developed in this passage as to reflect upon the prerequisites of what will later be termed the "imputation" of the sufferer's righteousness to the needs of the guilty.

"The suffering of innocence redeems." Is this a universal moral truth, grasped by the prophet under the influence of the terrible yet divinely guided experience of his people? Or was he wholly wrong in thinking that the Old Testament type of our Christ in any true sense redeemed others by his sufferings? Is the saying really too bold when applied to the imperfect innocence of Israel, or of any "Israelite indeed" before Christ? Does the saying only become true when it is referred to the stainless innocence of our Lord? Either way, we are at liberty to recognize divine teaching in this passage; whether, by the providence which overrules human error, so that what is said untruly of suffering Israelite or suffering Israel becomes true indeed when transferred to the suffering Christ; or, because God revealed in Old Testament days a principle which has its regally supreme manifestation in Jesus of Nazareth, yet in measure is fulfilled elsewhere. It will be more satisfying to us if we find ourselves able to take this second view of the central passage embodying the Old Testament preparation for Christ: if that passage was preparatory not in virtue of God's overruling men's illusions, but rather through His communicating truth; if there was at least a half-truth in the view which the prophet took

of contemporary moral realities. But, here again, it is needless for us to pronounce dogmatic judgment. On either view, God was preparing the way for Christ. On either view, Christ stands supreme and incomparable. If indeed there are other realizations of the principle, yet He makes them all grow pale before the brightness of His rising

Velut inter ignes
Luna minores.

The suffering of the innocent redeems the guilty. Can we become more precise, and still hold the saying to be of general moral application? Can we say that the suffering of innocence, even apart from Calvary, is a *sacrifice*, and an *atonement for the guilt* of others? Apart from perfect innocence, victorious innocence, it will be difficult for the Christian heart to accept *this* formulation as literal truth. Here the prophetic vision does seem to pass into an illusion, inevitable at this stage in history, and yet illusion, not truth; a thing which God's mercy must tolerate and God's wise providence overrule, yet no part of the eternal abiding content of this great vision—save as its thoughts are transformed, as well as fulfilled, in Christ.

With whatever lack of emphasis, the passage implies that the former mockers and persecutors

have been led to repentance by something that has supervened upon the tragic suffering of innocence. It implies that this is at least in part *how* suffering innocence redeems—by inducing the guilty to repent. Now history does not tell us of the outer ring of mankind crowding in penitence to acknowledge their redemption by what their godly brethren have undeservedly endured. Still less, perhaps, does history tell us of Gentile nations—Jew-baiters or others—hastening with tears of repentance to hail Israel as their sin-bearer and redeemer. But here Christ justifies the faith of the prophet with grand and resounding achievement. Men have crowded to the cross of Christ. Men do crowd to the cross of Christ. They are in bitterness, as they look on Him whom they have pierced ; but their bitterness is mingled with hope. It is the birth pangs of a new creation. Towards God, and towards all men, Christ's penitents realize wholly new moral possibilities. This power, this unique glory, belongs to our Christ—yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

With all deductions, therefore, one must be prepared to appeal to the human reason and conscience in favour of a theology of Atonement, simply because of what Isa. liii. contains. Is this complex of deep, solemn, tender, humble

thoughts merely extravagant rhetoric? Or is it a sure word of God, and a foundation never to be destroyed? Some, with Albrecht Ritschl,[1] may seek to dissect the passage into a heap of dead fragments, signifying nothing. Others will feel constrained to judge that the mind which goes to work on such a passage in such fashion, and with such results, is morally colour-blind.

We have not yet exhausted the teachings of the chapter. Verbally at least it formulates the doctrine of penal substitution. And consequently, all through the ages, this great chapter has served as one of the fountain-heads of that type of theology. Nevertheless, at this point, one may venture to think that the prophet's speech passes into the region of symbolical rather than either dogmatic or ethical and spiritual truth. His principle we know—the suffering of innocence redeems. His principle is not—punishment at all costs; whether punishment of the guilty or punishment of a substitute. It had been man's error in the old bad unrepentant days to hold the Sufferer as one "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." It is a new-found truth, incompatible with that misjudgment, that "He was wounded for our transgressions," and—if one is not pressing the

[1] Or with Dean Rashdall.

words too far—that "with His stripes" we have, not exemption merely, but "healing." So again there is a contrast for the prophet between the historical record, "He was numbered with the transgressors," and the underlying spiritual reality; "Yet He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." There is a certain analogy between the process of punishment and the process of redemption; between the effects of punishment and the effects of redemption. But, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is redemption higher than punishment, and the effects of redemption higher than the best effects punishment ever can yield. This distinction one believes to be essential, and vitally Christian. At any rate, one may profoundly reverence the spiritual greatness of Isa. liii., and yet may decline to accept some of its terms of speech as anything more than symbolism and imagery, shadowing forth truths which almost if not entirely "break through language, and escape."

One further point still calls for attention. The last words of the chapter—words which, as the writer believes, textual criticism does not challenge—tell us that this sufferer also "bare the sins of many," and furthermore "made intercession for the transgressors." In the Old Testament, intercession is a prophetic function

—the function of an Abraham, a Moses, a Samuel[1]; a function strangely forbidden to a Jeremiah, strangely hopeless during the life of an Ezekiel. The mysterious sufferer of Isa. liii. has high prophetic quality (as well as—if we may say so—sacrificial quality). He intercedes for the transgressors. The New Testament will interpret this, with apparently entire originality, of Christ's priestly—or high-priestly—functions. One passage records intercession during the Crucifixion (Luke xxiii. 34), but without in any way underlining the record, or marking it as a fulfilment of prophecy. More usually the New Testament conceives Christ *in heaven* as interceding for His people (Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25; 1 John ii. 1).

It is dangerous to go behind written Scripture in the effort to establish an unwritten primitive Christian tradition. But here, if anywhere, it would seem that we have evidence of such a tradition, and indeed evidence in Scripture itself. None of the passages just cited argues for the doctrine of Christ's intercession, or introduces it as a new revelation. All of them seem to presuppose it as familiar and admitted truth. Here accordingly, as hardly anywhere else, we seem enabled to verify the direct influence of

[1] For the Old Testament literature, Abraham and Moses are prophets.

Isa. liii. upon the mind of the New Testament. What the prophet observed in his spiritually discerned type was held with confidence to be not less true of the great antitype.

So far we have been speaking of what may be called *direct* preparation in the Old Testament for the Christian doctrine of Atonement. It is desirable to add a brief statement regarding another train of Old Testament thought which, while not in its own nature or of necessity looking forward to New Testament views of Atonement, yet proves in the event to make a considerable contribution towards the doctrine. Ps. xlix. contemplates, as logically or ideally possible, redemption from death in the strict sense of *ransom*.[1] More than one Hebrew term is employed. It is probable that they are true synonyms, and carry with them at the outset the full connotation of "price." Bad, rich men oppress and afflict the righteous. But there is one enemy whom they cannot face. It is impossible for them to buy off inexorable death. As the text of the Psalm has reached us, it asserts that no man can pay a price adequate to redeem his *brother*; and this formula proves itself of no small importance—as we must presently note—in the New Testament. But

[1] Paid to God? Paid to death?

the text of ver. 7, though common to the LXX and the Massoretic Hebrew, is undoubtedly secondary and incorrect. For אָח, a brother, we must read the ejaculation אַךְ; comparison with ver. 15, the climax of the whole Psalm, places this conclusion beyond question. It is *himself*, then, whom the bad man (according to the Psalmist's own thought) seeks to rescue from death—vainly! No price is adequate! Bad men die, and good men survive in happiness. And there is a higher consolation still. "God shall redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, for He shall *take* me," like another Enoch, to be with Himself.[1] With no payment, no ransom, God by His strong hand rescues His friend and places him in eternal safety. Accordingly, at this final stage of the Psalmist's thought, "redeem" means simply "deliver."

The same thought of redemption—deliverance by divine power, not by payment of a price—occurs in the Deutero-Isaiah.[2] "Ye have sold yourselves for nought"—חִנָּם, LXX δωρεάν; it is interesting to compare Gal. ii. 21—"and ye shall be redeemed without price." A different

[1] There would be no justification for the emotion of ver. 15, or for its studied contrast to ver. 14, if it only, like the preceding hemistich, referred to earthly survival. Had the Psalm no thought of immortality, it would be incredibly jejune.

[2] Isa. lii. 3. The passage is now marked by critics as a later gloss, but even as such it claims our notice.

turn is given to the thought at xlii. 3. "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." Here the Persian conqueror is conceived as the recipient of a ransom-price. Cyrus may well be ready to permit Israel's return to Palestine when he has been awarded such immense gains in other regions.

A more curious passage occurs in the Elihu speeches of Job (xxxiii. 23, 24). In dangerous sickness, "If there be with him (*i.e.* the man being chastened) an angel, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man what is right for him; then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." And presently God heals the patient.[1] According to our best commentators, Elihu thinks of the angel of death as baffled, for the time, by the intervention of a friendly or mediatorial angel. The singular expression "I have found a ransom" is taken as referring to nothing more than the affliction which the sick man had endured. We have just a shadow here of two things which will meet us in later history—the great New Testament thought that there *is* a ransom-price to be paid for man's deliverance from sin or from death, and the grotesque fancy

[1] The kindred passage xxxvi. 18, 19, merely reiterates some of the thoughts of Ps. xlix.

that the angel of death, definitely conceived in later days as the evil spirit, received as his price Christ's blood.

Outside the Old Testament canon we find important references to atonement by martyrdom in Macc. iv.—especially at vi. 29 and xvii. 21, 22. Here we have the feature which is probably absent from Isa. liii.—the ascription of atoning power to the death of individual martyrs; a thought which may be Jewish but is hardly Christian. It would be perilous to assume any relation between this book and the thoughts of Jesus. Even chronologically, such influence must be excluded. At the most one might argue that the train of thought reveals a remote parallel to the thoughts of Christ, or that it suggests a similar psychological environment in the two cases. But even that conclusion would be precarious.

There is more room for suspecting contact in the case of St. Paul. The juxtaposition of the thought of "propitiation" with the mention of "blood" constitutes at any rate a striking resemblance to Rom. iii. 25.

CHAPTER III

Christ's Thought of His Own Death

There are two extreme views regarding Christ's attitude towards His death of shame. According to an extreme dogmatic theory, He came to earth almost exclusively in order to die, and therefore consciously looked forward to death from the very outset of His ministry. According to painfully extreme radical theories, He never looked for death, and least of all for crucifixion, so that in the end He passed away disillusioned, with words of despair on His lips, amid the darkness of physical nature and with deeper darkness in His soul. Both these views are false. The facts annihilate them.

Our supreme reason for believing that Christ began His ministry without any certainty of the cross is that He offered the gospel of divine mercy to His own people. Historically, it was the unbelief of Israel that made the death of Christ inevitable. In this, doubtless, Israel was representative of mankind. It was the characteristic reaction of human sin to the

supreme goodness and grace of God which nailed Jesus to the cross; but the proximate form of this reaction was Israel's rejection of Israel's opportunity. Could the opportunity have been genuinely presented to the Jews had Christ foreseen from the first His rejection? Some of the great prophets of the Old Testament, according to the books which they have left us—*possibly* coloured by the experience of their later lives—began their careers from the very outset as men sent upon a forlorn hope. But the Messiah could hardly do that; and the tone of joyful confidence which rings out in much of Christ's early teaching is inconsistent with any such *a priori* assumption. He "learned obedience"; and obedience amid "the things which He suffered" was a strange and hard lesson. If we accept the evidence of the Gospels, Jesus did not know Himself for Messiah before the Baptism. Discovery of what He was came to Him as a divine revelation—as a voice from heaven. Partly, He was the Son of God (Ps. ii. 7). Partly, He was the ideally perfect Servant of God (Isa. xlii. 1). If before His public ministry He did not even know Himself as Messiah, how could He yet know Himself as sufferer? That was a second, a deeper, a harder revelation.

It may seem that the beautiful parable-germ

about the sons of the bride-chamber is inconsistent with the view that Christ did not at first clearly anticipate suffering. For the little parable is placed early in the tradition of our Gospels; and, as its wording now stands, it unhesitatingly predicts a tragic death. It would be easy to brush aside this argument by insisting on the chronological uncertainty of gospel date; but that retort might savour too much of "vigour *v.* rigour"; and there are better grounds for doubting whether the original saying could be so definite a prophecy of death. We all know that parables must not be taken as detailed allegories. We all know, too, that allegorizing exegesis began very early — probably even within the New Testament. What is the precise original situation here? Christ is asked, "Why do your disciples not fast, like all other devout men?" His answer is, "They are too happy"; or, pictorially, "Can you expect guests at a marriage to fast?" Allegory carries matters further. The bridegroom is the Messiah. Those who believe on Him are guests at His marriage feast. But the Messiah is destined for suffering; when the bridal rejoicings have had this startling close, fasting will be appropriate, and Christianity will fall into line with the other great religions. Quite possibly, most of this is later Church-reflection.

The approval — the postponed approval — of fasting interrupts the context, whose further parable-germs[1] continue to insist that fasting on the part of Christians is non-natural.

One's only reason for hesitating to dispose of the passage in this fashion is the fine poetical quality of the words which predict suffering. Glosses are generally prosaic; words which bear the stamp of genius are for the most part original and genuine. Perhaps we may conjecture that the shadow of a cloud crossed the mind of the Master, at the moment when He realized what He had said. Can marriage-guests fast *in the very presence of the bridegroom?* But if they should *lose* the bridegroom—if death or disgrace or some imperious and gloomy errand should drag him away—then indeed would the festivities be darkened, and the friends of the bridegroom must *fast.*[2] It was not a great or strange invasion of the allegorizing tendency if the mind of our Lord worked in this fashion. We venture to conjecture an "if" rather than a "when"—*if* [not *when*] the bridegroom is taken away, then they shall fast. But on no construction of these words, and at no stage in His career, would

[1] Even, though indirectly, the one peculiar to St. Luke.

[2] Modern usage would at least mention the bride, if not concentrate upon her as the central figure. Ancient and Oriental thought might regard such mention as barely modest.

the mind of Jesus be sealed against the thought that suffering was at least possible for Him—suffering like Jeremiah's, but crueller; suffering according to the tremendous programme of Isa. liii. Let us add, finally, that Jesus' sanction to fasting is poetry rather than dry lawyerly prose. "They are too happy to fast." "And yet, it is true, they may have a very different lot from unmingled happiness laid up in store for them." "Nevertheless, the religious life led by the children of the heavenly Father cannot fittingly be patched with usages natural to God's bond-servants in earlier days."

Either then (1) as displaced, or (2) as an allegorizing gloss, or (3) as the passing apprehension of a possible sorrowful interruption of bridal joy, or (4) as conditional and not absolute —the verses can be viewed as perfectly compatible with our assertion that Jesus began His work desiring and expecting to be welcomed by His own people whom He so dearly loved.

"From that time forth," says the First Gospel at a somewhat late point in the gospel story, viz., after Peter's confession at Cæsarea Philippi—"from that time forth" Jesus began to teach His disciples about His approaching death. Thrice over, says Mark, He gave this teaching; and Matthew and Luke carefully

reproduce the threefold warning. Even more strongly evidential[1] are Christ's incidental references to His appointed ordeal of pain; *e.g.*, "O faithless and perverse generation! How long shall I suffer you?" "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink?" "I have a baptism to be baptized with; how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" The Gospels further tell us that Jesus read the signs of the times. In the Baptist's martyrdom He perceived a sure indication of what was in store for Himself. Still further, we are told that He pointed disciples to the *Scriptures*; the Old Testament had its programme of suffering, which was growing plain to Him and must grow plain to them. And surely it is incredible that as the skies darkened overhead one with the spiritual insight of Jesus—one who now called upon His followers to "take up the cross"—one who found Himself foreshadowed in Isa. xlii. and other Servant passages—could fail to apply to Himself Isa. liii. and Ps. xxii. Probably, then, in the mind of Jesus Himself the fact of Atonement came first and the interpretation only second; the fact anticipated, accepted as a divine necessity, and then expounded to His disciples in two great synoptic passages. To these even the Fourth Gospel, with its wealth

[1] So J. Weiss rightly observes.

of mature reflection, has little or nothing to add.

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."[1] This, the first of our two great passages, is found in Mark and reproduced in Matthew—not in Luke; the latter's version of the context (xxii. 24–27) is placed later in time, under the very shadow of the cross, and yet omits all reference to the death of Christ. Plainly Luke is following a separate authority, and its compiler may have been irresponsive to the thought of atonement. That is not true, however, of St. Luke himself. His hospitable mind found a place and a welcome for the most distinctive utterances of Pauline evangelicalism,[2] and an equal welcome for the Jewish-Christian hatred of wealth and praise of poverty. If we accept the Marcan setting of the saying now before us, it is out of the question that Jesus, who tells James and John that they, like Himself, must be prepared for death, should say nothing about His death in the companion lesson which He adds for the benefit of "the Ten."

[1] Mark x. 45.

[2] Comp. Acts xx. 28. We should deceive ourselves if we supposed that Luke incorporated any teaching with which he does not feel himself in sympathy. It is not probable that any early Christian writer compiled history in such a spirit of scientific detachment.

"The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many." This crucial saying may include an echo of Isa. liii. 12—the great Sufferer "bare the sins of *many*"—but it throws us back more directly upon the teaching of Ps. xlix. in regard to "ransom" from death. Our Lord of course knows the Psalm in what modern scholarship feels bound to regard as an erroneous text, which contemplates as logically conceivable, though never a real possibility of the moral world, that a man might be able to ransom "his brother" from the doom of dying. The original reading evidently declared that no one, however rich, could ransom *himself*. We have another striking proof of our Lord's interest in this Psalm in that solemn passage which reiterates the warning that the successful godless man can offer nothing whatsoever out of all his stores of wealth in exchange for his "soul" or "life"—he may have triumphed over multitudes of human rivals, but God and death are inexorable. Perhaps it is not too bold to say that subconsciously, in this other saying, the mind of our Master finds its way back to the original teaching of Ps. xlix., reproducing it with added power. Of course this achievement of spiritual insight does not prevent the less correct *textus receptus* of the Psalm from making its suggestions to the

conscious mind of Jesus or from being used in the providence of God to define Christ's thought of atonement.

The Psalm in its present form asserts that it is impossible for any man to pay a price which will redeem a brother man from the necessity of dying. Ransoms by great deeds of vicarious generosity are logically thinkable, morally non-existent. Jesus knows better than that! He finds Himself faced by the hideous prospect of dying, under every circumstance of pain and shame; but He recognizes in this destiny the will of God, deposited in Old Testament Scriptures, notably in Isa. liii. Therefore, with a solemn gladness, He accepts His tremendous lot of suffering. It is not to be wasted suffering. He is "to see of the travail of His soul and to be satisfied." He is to ransom "many." Knowing Himself to be Messiah, He must regard His death by suffering as a thing of vastly greater significance than the death of any martyr of Maccabean times—if indeed He thinks of such martyrs at all. Here, then, the word "redemption" or "ransom" picks up again some of its original connotation. The Old Testament had come to make it a simple equivalent for "deliverance," tracing such deliverance to the omnipotent power of God. Christ knows of a price

to be paid. By moral and spiritual means, in uttermost weakness, He is to redeem His brethren. He calls the price His "life." Had the saying been a gloss, due to early Church theology, it would almost certainly have spoken of the "blood of Christ," not the "life," as offered and accepted in ransom. Such is the language of Acts and Epistles. As yet, the Master's own language is different. And the difference helps to stamp the great saying now before us as the Master's personal thought.

On the other hand, there is hardly need to insist that Christ refrains from the slightest suggestion that the price is paid to Diabolus. The learned Abbé Rivière calls our attention to a passage from Sabatier, in which the latter seems to suggest that Jesus may really have had that ugly thought in His mind. Rivière's language is not quite explicit. It is not certain that he imputes this strange misinterpretation of Jesus' words to Sabatier, as Sabatier's serious belief. Nor is Sabatier's own language perfectly unambiguous; but we shall probably understand him rightly if we regard him as hinting *first* that the whole saying is rhetoric, metaphor, symbol; and *secondly* that if theology insists upon turning such imagery into dogma, then Jesus' words must imply that Diabolus gets paid off. This is a natural enough line

to be taken by an ethical rationalist, who dislikes the very thought of atonement. But, however natural, it is neither good theology nor scientific exegesis. Jesus' saying is shaped by the words of Ps. xlix., and therefore it is plain that the ransom spoken of must be conceived as given "to God" (Ps. xlix. 7).

The offer of ransom to God by a bad, rich man on his own behalf creates one set of associations; the offer of ransom to God on behalf of mankind by a Saviour is a very different matter. It is not easy to say what are the implications of Christ's words. If we are pressed to define these more sharply, we might say that the moral order of the universe receives the price, and therefore ultimately God Himself receives it, since by Him the moral order is shaped and upheld. These expressions are, no doubt, characteristically modern, and it may be hard to say how the early Christian mind would have stated such a thought in detail. At any rate, the early Church rose to the perception that God did not redeem man by mere power. It was an unhappy perversion and degradation of that noble saying, when the theory of the devil's rights came into being and carried men's thoughts captive.

Or we might offer as a second paraphrase to our Lord's saying about the ransom, that the

death of Christ makes human immortality morally credible and morally inevitable, in spite of man's sin.

There is fuller theological teaching in the companion passage, which contains the sayings at the Last Supper, especially the words connected with the Cup.

And yet here again we have to fight our way forward past some rather grave critical doubts. For the second time, upon a certain construction of the textual evidence—a construction which commended itself to such unbiased judges as Westcott and Hort—we find in Luke's record, or in the authority which Luke has preferred to follow, elimination of the theology of atonement. But we must not let this conclusion, even if we should accept it, make an exaggerated impression upon our minds. It remains certain that Luke was acquainted with the Marcan record of the Last Supper. It remains certain that he himself—friend of Paul, as he was—held a very strong doctrine of atonement by the blood of Christ. If there is really a tradition of the Last Supper which has nothing to say on atonement, such tradition may reflect the mind of Luke's authority, but does not reflect Luke's own.

We assume, then, as extremely well attested

the familiar record of the Last Supper. Possibly —upon one reading of the evidence—the record, steeped as it is in the thought of atonement, is Lucan. Certainly it is Matthaean and Marcan. Certainly it is also Pauline. Accordingly we are assured by very strong evidence that, at this supreme moment, our Lord interpreted His sufferings and death to His disciples as sacrificial. But—unless for the recurrence here again of the term "many"—we have no clear trace of borrowing from Isa. liii. "My blood of the covenant" suggests three Old Testament references; first, the record of the covenant-sacrifice in Ex. xxiv. 7; secondly, the great New Covenant passage of Jer. xxxi., in which forgiveness is emphasized as the new covenant's central glory; thirdly, Zech. ix. 11. It seems probable that the last is the starting-point of Christ's thought, though the others play their part in filling out His doctrine. The context in Deutero-Zechariah had been much in our Lord's mind, for it contains the programme of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In making this assertion we set aside the strange suggestion that the disciples rather than the Master organized that scene of short-lived triumph. The Gospels affirm the very opposite. Jesus organized it! Possibly, it was meant as a final deliberate appeal for recognition as Messiah,

and as a Messiah of peace. Yet, if so, it attained little success. Matthew tells us that the friendly crowds described Jesus as "the prophet of Nazareth in Galilee"—not as the Christ; and the Fourth Gospel chimes in unexpectedly with the assurance that at the time the disciples did not realize what they were doing, though they perceived its significance afterwards.[1] Perhaps, indeed, the triumphal entry might be sufficiently explained by our Lord's devout regard for what was written in the Old Testament. The programme was appointed for Him; and He would fulfil it.

A second reference to Deutero-Zechariah is found in our Lord's quotation, "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." If, then, two passages from that prophecy played their part in our Master's thoughts and actions at this supreme time, it is more than likely that His words in connexion with the testamental cup refer to a third passage: "By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners from the pit wherein is no water."

In the original the person addressed is of course feminine. It is the "daughter of Zion"

[1] Here and in some other passages "Son of David" may simply mean "Man of Davidic descent." The fact—or a belief that such was the fact—might count for not a little, even apart from any thought of Jesus as Messiah.

who receives the promise. That, however, constitutes no hindrance to our Lord's claiming for Himself, with a certain heroic self-consciousness, the fulfilment of so great a word of hope, all the more if the blood of this His covenant is His own blood. There is similiar self-consciousness in the command, "This do in remembrance of Me,"[1] if we may trust that saying as literally historical. Memories of paschal redemption from Egyptian bondage were to lose themselves henceforth in the remembrance of a greater deliverance from a slavery worse than any which political oppression could inflict. We ought perhaps to connect the saying at the Last Supper, if moulded by the divine speaker on Zech. ix. 11, with the Ransom passage. It would seem that here at least Jesus is thinking of deliverance from bondage. He is planning (if we like to put it so) the rescue of those who are in slavery to the Evil One.

> He comes, the prisoners to release,
> In Satan's bondage held;
> The gates of brass before Him burst,
> The iron fetters yield.

Only there is no thought in Christ's teachings

[1] It is plain upon many grounds that our Lord looked forward to a time of testing for His disciples when He was to be absent from them in body—a time when they had need to remember His past gifts and to look watchfully for His return.

of a *transaction* for the benefit of that evil power.

What we have been saying may appear to some to represent Christ too much as a scholastic theologian, running about from text to text of the Old Testament. But will they think again? Will they try to grasp what it must have been to look forward to a disaster which was rapidly approaching — a disaster which, as our evidence plainly enough declares, Jesus foresaw? By spiritual sympathy He penetrated deeper into the world of Old Testament thought, and was more at home in its richest portions, than any one before Him or after. What else could He do but treasure every word of "the things concerning Himself"?

Apart from the record of our Lord's doctrinal teaching there are two great scenes or utterances in His personal and spiritual history which must be kept in view when we seek to study His thought of atonement. There is the Agony, and there is the cry of desertion on the cross. These tremendous records are among the strongest buttresses of a penal theory of Atonement. And, even if we decline to regard that theory of Atonement as more than a vague parable of the true significance of Christ's death, we are bound by the most

stringent obligations as historians and as Christians to inquire what such disturbances in the soul of our Lord may imply.

Courage is not equivalent to insensibility; and the anguished struggle through which our Lord passed in Gethsemane makes His subsequent calm the more majestic. If He believed with the theology of His age that death as such was the wages of sin, it must be a tremendous and terrible thing for Him to look into the near eyes of death. If He thought—like that unknown disciple of the second generation who has left us the Epistle to the Hebrews, Apollos or another—if He thought of the angel of death as the evil potency who "had the power thereof," then on that ground death must be dreadful and hateful. And His words regarding ransom seem to make it plain that death for Him could not be what it was to be for so many of those on whose behalf He gave Himself—peaceful, happy, effortless. He "tasted death for every man" with irrepressible shuddering but unflinching resolution. And herein is love.

What is known among us as the Cry of Desertion must occupy a less assured place in our construction. The words might be an infiltration from Ps. xxii., not spoken by Him, but imputed to Him by His disciples;

we observe in Matthew's passion-narrative (xxvii. 43) how the programme of the Psalm is followed even to the point of falsifying history and asserting an incredible literal fulfilment of the prophetic picture.

Again, we find at Luke xxiii. 46 a different and seemingly more suitable expression from the Psalter put into the mouth of the dying Jesus. In reply to this it might be urged that the theologians of the Early Church would have hesitated to ascribe to their dying Lord so tremendous an utterance as the Cry of Desertion unless the historical evidence had been so strong as to override all hesitation. But what twentieth-century mind can confidently control the working of the Christian mind of the first century?

Another possible view is to hold that our Lord in His anguish called aloud upon God—this would account for the strange sequel, that they said He was summoning "Elijah"—and that later reflexion interpreted the cry as a fragment of Ps. xxii.[1]

If we take the record as it stands, we may incline to interpret the Cry of Desertion as expressing the terrible sense of what it is to die

[1] While I believe that my own mind was moving towards this conjecture, I owe it directly to the Rev. R. Travers Herford, Librarian of Dr. Williams' Library.

when the mind is unclouded. This is expressed with almost morbid power in the *Dream of Gerontius* :

> A visitant
> Is knocking his dire summons at my door,
> The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt,
> Has never, never come to me before ; . . .
> As though my very being had given way,
> As though I was no more a substance now,
> And could fall back on naught to be my stay
> (Help, living Lord ! Thou my sole Refuge, Thou !)
> And turn no whither, but must needs decay
> Into the shapeless, scopeless, blank abyss.

Or, a little further on in the poem :

> I can no more, for now it comes again,
> That sense of ruin, which is worse than pain,
> That masterful negation and collapse
> Of all that makes me man ; as though I bent
> Over the dizzy brink
> Of some sheer infinite descent ;
> Or worse, as though
> Down, down for ever I was falling through
> The solid framework of created things,
> And needs must sink, and sink.

If it seems that the words from the Psalm must mean even more than this, we shall not try to admit their historicity while evacuating them of meaning by saying—as some have done—that Jesus was repeating the Psalm to Himself. It was no moment for holy and peaceful meditation upon Scripture ! Yet we might recognize infinite significance in the fact that His anguish found such utterance as this.

When, for the first and only time, He fails to feel God near Him, He still exclaims, "My God"![1] Nor is that all. It is possible that an earlier saying about the joy of the sons of the bride-chamber in the bridegroom's very presence, had brought across His mind in swift sequel a chilling dread. Even so now, and more so now, the Cry of Desertion, if literally uttered by Christ, must also have had its sequel, and that a sequel of comfort. The closing portion of the Psalm would not but rise up before His thoughts like a message straight from heaven. He had been feeling as God's lesser saints felt before Him. He had cried as they cried. And He like them, He more than any of them, *must* be consoled and delivered. For God "had not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, nor had He hidden His face from Him"—unless "for a small moment"—"but when He cried unto Him, He heard." And so the record of Christ's sufferings — those unexampled sufferings — passes into the vision of Christ glorified with an unending glory.

[1] This remark is one of the coincidences between those diverse minds, John M'Leod Campbell and Albrecht Ritschl.

CHAPTER IV

The Apostolic Teaching on Atonement

I

We recognize with most certainty early and pre-Pauline teaching in the opening chapters of Acts. It is true that the compiler of the Acts —whom recent research warrants us in identifying more confidently than ever with St. Luke —was well acquainted with Pauline theology. But he is not himself a systematic thinker, and has evidently felt no temptation to revise the record of Peter's early speeches which came into his hands, in order to Paulinize their teaching. As students of history we must feel grateful to him for having so closely followed his sources.

There is another possible channel of information. One must admit that it is a legitimate operation to seek to distil apostolic theology from the record of the Master's words in the Synoptic Gospels. Even if we chose to assume that no tinge of later thought had anywhere

influenced the formulation of these words, the very fact that they had a continuous life in the Church—first as oral tradition, then as reduced to writing—must have done much to control the personal beliefs of the earliest Christian generation. Here, however, we shall hardly touch the delicate task of recording proofs of apostolic belief regarding Atonement from the record of the impression created by the Master's words. We have material enough for our purpose in Acts i.–xii., or, if we supplement it, we shall rather argue for direct influence from the Old Testament upon the Epistles than seek to manipulate the Gospels for our purpose.

The outstanding feature in the theology of the speeches contained in Acts i.–xii. is the assertion of Christ's resurrection and exaltation—both in one. As it is often put: Christ is preached in these speeches as the Crucified One, and *yet* as the Messiah. This statement however, while true, is not the whole truth. Although the execution of Christ is charged upon Israel as a crime (v. 30)—if partially palliated because done "in ignorance" by the people and even by the rulers (iii. 17)—it was part of God's deliberate purpose (ii. 23, iv. 24–28) and the fulfilment of many Scriptures (iii. 18). Hence it is no excess of orthodox zeal which makes us read between these lines

the foreshadowing of a theology of Atonement. True, the principles requiring the death of the Son of God are not specified; but the existence of such principles is plainly implied. Inevitably, teaching of this kind must lead on to fuller development of doctrine.

II

Paulinism itself cannot be considered a Melchizedek among theologies. It has its pedigree. The apostle's own testimony is that he "received" from those who were in Christ before him not only sundry historical details, but the great assertion that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures of the Old Testament—those Scriptures which dwell upon suffering. It will not be questioned that Paul accepted and believed the record he has given us of the Last Supper (1 Cor. xi.), in which the theological significance of the redeeming death receives heightened and characteristic emphasis. We are not yet even half ready to compare and contrast Pauline and pre-Pauline theologies of Atonement. For we have not yet embarked on our rapid summary of St. Paul's leading thoughts. Yet we may as well say in advance how we regard the

matter. The primitive theology of the Early Christian Church expounds and defends Christ's death as a sin-offering. Or, even when it does not reach an explicit utterance—*e.g.* in the Petrine speeches—that is its native tendency. Isa. liii. and the words of Christ at the Supper made this inevitable. And, when we pass to St. Paul, echoes of this teaching still meet us. He employs sacrificial formulæ, or formulæ which must have a sacrificial sense, though it is possible at times that he has found a different sense for them (Rom. iii. 25, v. 9, viii. 3). But, when his own thought moves freely, it moves upon different lines. The unconverted Saul has a Pharisee doctrine of good works, issuing in merit for the righteous individual and possibly, in a vaguer sense, for the community. Paul the servant of Christ has a doctrine of Divine grace miraculously filling the vacuum due to the absence and to the impossibility of merit in sinful mankind. By law Paul means largely moral law. The individual would be saved, if he could keep that law; as he cannot keep it, it condemns him. Sacrifice as a legal institution, in some sense mediating salvation, does not appeal to Paul. On the ground of chronology, inasmuch as Christ suffered at the Passover season, Paul once describes Him

as "our passover, sacrificed"—or perhaps simply[1] "slain—for us"; and then follow needed moral lessons for the Christians of Corinth (1 Cor. v. 7). Paul's own mind works most readily along different lines. He is visibly a Pharisee still, though a Pharisee filled with self-despair and emancipated by faith in Christ.

We proceed, therefore, to summarize Paul's central belief.

(1) The clearest of all trains of thought found in St. Paul is an evident remainder of his Pharisaism. Jesus was accursed—the law had set its stigma upon Him at the Crucifixion. The fiercely conscientious if half-uneasy persecutor felt and taught that the false Messiah had received His dreadful dues. Woe to those who were still trying to make mischief in His name! All this theology stands, baptized or half baptized into the Christian faith by the thought of substitution. The law requires perfect obedience under penalty of a curse (Gal. v. 4; Deut. xxvii. 26); of course St. Paul understands these words more stringently than any Old Testament mind dreamed of doing. And he quotes a verse from Deuteronomy in order to prove that the death which Jesus died was one upon which the curse of God rested

[1] *Infra*, p. 75.

with peculiar severity (Gal. iii. 13; Deut. xxi. 23). This train of thought from Galatians must be coupled with the language of Isa. liii. as the second great fountain-head of the doctrine of a penal atonement. But it is difficult for a mind which has once detached itself from the Protestant dogmatic tradition to assign decisive value to the teachings which we are now describing. The penal theory occurs in Galatians as an explanation of the fact that mercy is extended to the Jews; the redemption of mankind as such is left, for the time being, in the background. We are to conceive that it would not have been morally seemly — hardly, indeed, morally thinkable—that God should terminate the reign of law in Israel without satisfying its declaration of a curse to rest upon imperfect obedience. Now it is true that, upon one side of it, and in certain moods, the law presents itself to St. Paul as a thing of extremely lofty character. It is "holy and just and good"; it is described as "the law of God." This is the attitude of mind disclosed almost everywhere in the Epistle to the Romans. Yet both Galatians (iii. 19) and Romans (vi. 20) tell us that the law "came in between" the beginning of the Divine purpose of mercy, in the promise, and its culmination, in the Gospel. It was ordained "by angels" (Gal. iii. 19) rather than by the Most

High.[1] Accordingly, Galatians goes on to characterize the law as a half-heathenish thing, and to stress what Christian school-theology calls its "ceremonial" elements. Law-religion in the Old Testament, according to Galatians, is hardly one stage — if as much as that— in advance of the religions practised by the Galatians before their conversion. And to this view of things, when faced by certain heresies, Paul returns later on, in Colossians (ii. 20). Those who plead for a Pauline doctrine of penal substitution ignore all these accessory elements in his thinking. Is that fair? When we give effect to these accessory elements, can it be claimed that St. Paul's theology is either normative or normal? At times the Apostle's thinking takes him to the very verge of Gnosticism, at least in the sense in which his great erratic disciple Marcion was a Gnostic.

(2) Yet, if this theology which affirms the abrogation of the Old Testament law by Christ's endurance of the curse is St. Paul's clearest-cut doctrine, one does not for a moment pretend that it is his only doctrine of Atonement, or even the only such doctrine which contains

[1] A different turn is given by St. Paul to this assertion, borrowed from Jewish theology, from what we observe in other New Testament references to it (Acts vii. 53; Heb. ii. 2).

penal or *quasi*-penal elements. St. Paul is the greatest exponent in all the Bible of the universality of sin. Whether because corrupted by man's fall—"by one man sin entered into the world"—or rather, as some think, because bad in itself and exhibited for the first time in Adam's transgression,[1] the mind of the flesh is "enmity against God" and "can be" nothing else.[2] Again, St. Paul is perfectly convinced that death, as a literal physical fact, is the consequence and penalty of sin. Accordingly, even apart from his strange individual theology of law, it appears as an *a priori* certainty with Paul that Christ, who knew no sin, has suffered that which is inherently sin's penalty. With a vague terribleness, though the language is metaphorical rather than scientifically exact, St. Paul sums up this theology of Atonement, God made the Sinless One "to be sin for us."[3] The fact of Christ's death, once to this man of Tarsus so tremendous a "stumbling-block," forced him to a theory of substitution. Christ was cursed; and there is no curse now for the friends of Christ. Our Lord's *death* as such seems less capable of being explained by this theory of substitution. Do not Christians,

[1] It is possible, no doubt, that Paul failed to distinguish between *post hoc* and *propter hoc*. But can we be bound by such logic to-day?

[2] Rom. viii. 7.

[3] 2 Cor. v. 21.

both Jewish and Gentile, still die? And yet, to St. Paul, that fact seemed a painful anomaly in the providence of God; he had to find relief in a special revelation (1 Thess. iv. 15). The typical Christian experience, as Paul conceived it and taught it to others, was one of survival till the Second Advent, when "the last enemy" was to be solemnly and for ever destroyed. It is doubtful whether the Apostle's theology of Atonement is satisfactorily adjusted to this anomaly—an anomaly which eighteen Christian centuries have forced us to regard as normal. It is to be admitted, then, that the doctrine of penal substitution, possibly in more forms than one, holds a place among St. Paul's utterances regarding the mystery of Atonement. But can it bind our thoughts still?

(3) At least equal in originality and in importance is another Pauline formulation—what has been widely known as the mystical doctrine of Atonement. If one accepts this terminology, one must guard oneself against being supposed to extend a welcome to mysticism strictly so-called. The latter is a doctrine of Nature-Pantheism. As such, it is indifferent to the process of history, and to the central event in the history of mankind—the Cross of Christ. The adjective "mystical" is applied to the Pauline doctrine of which we are now to

speak, partly at least because St. Paul implies a kinship in lot between Christ and His people, such as the mystery-religions affirmed between the gods of the mysteries and men who entered into communion with them by initiation. A special section in Romans (vi.–viii.) is devoted to this aspect of the Christian redemption; and neither Albrecht Ritschl nor Dr. Denney can argue us out of the perception that it contains distinctive and deeply important teaching.

Earlier than Romans, as we may confidently hold, came Galatians; and two of the great Atonement-texts in that epistle are mystical. If iii. 1 announces Christ crucified "for us," ii. 20 declares that the Christian has been "crucified with Christ," and vi. 14 that the world is "crucified to us, and we to it." It is true that there may be something logically anterior even to this mystical fellowship. Christ, says St. Paul, "loved me and gave Himself for me" (ii. 20). Yet it is noteworthy how much is offered to us in St. Paul's mystical doctrine —a non-legal, moral, yet objective doctrine of the Atonement of Jesus Christ as the necessary basis of the redemption of human character. Atonement is for him much more than the removal of certain preliminary obstacles. We are saved by the fellowship of Christ's suffer-

ings; a doctrine most memorable, most deep, most true, most vital.

(4) In another direction still we have a very singular formulation of Pauline theology regarding the death of Christ, viz., in the esoteric wisdom of which he speaks with some complacency in 1 Cor. ii. Those ignorant but murderous world-rulers, who outwitted themselves in crucifying Christ, have moved halfway in Paul's thoughts from the position of the angel-authors of the law—beings neither strictly good nor strictly bad—and have become almost if not quite evil angels. It has been said[1] that only Paul's stern monotheism kept him from anticipating the doctrine of ransom paid to Satan. This passage would seem to suggest that only a lesser cause saved him — the historical accident that the doctrine of Satan held a place by itself, and that the doctrine of the elementary spirits was an independent development in the Apostle's mind, or a separate borrowing from some region of his kaleidoscopic environment.

It is possible that Acts iv. 27 represents a more rational view of the "rulers of this world" —poor Herod and poor Pilate! And possibly the same passage gives a glimpse of the excuse put forward for the doctrine — a fantastic

[1] Comp. Franks, vol. i. p. 23.

exegesis of Ps. ii. Do those who ask us to accept as binding upon Christian faith everything found in St. Paul include in the demand 1 Cor. ii.? Do they accept it themselves? Or do they explain it away? Or do they perhaps ignore it? If this is St. Paul's esoteric wisdom, we may feel inclined to prefer the exoteric message addresed to "babes in Christ." Did not one greater than Paul say that God's secrets were hidden from the wise and revealed to babes? The plainest historical effect of 1 Cor. ii. has been to supply weapons to the theologians who taught that the devil was bought off and was tricked in the process.[1]

(5) While the doctrine of redemption runs through St. Paul's epistles (ἐξαγοράζω ;[2] ἀπολύτρωσις),[3] it is flanked by a doctrine of reconciliation more peculiar to himself; and this latter doctrine makes a strong appeal to Albrecht Ritschl and the German mind in general, as also to Dr. Denney. There seems little doubt that for St. Paul reconciliation is two-sided—not only of man to God, but of God to man. Rom. v. 10 is fairly conclusive on the point. And such a view of reconciliation is no more

[1] With less plausibility they also make use of Col. ii. 14.

[2] Of redemption from the curse of law.

[3] Of redemption from sin as such. Law speaks to those *under law* (Rom. iii. 19) and proves them guilty. Every one knows that the *Gentile* world is in slavery to sin.

than one might expect in the light of St. Paul's highly generalized doctrine of sin. If we venture to criticize the assumption of a Divine hostility towards mankind as a race, that is because the modern Christian mind inclines to a doctrine of sin more carefully graduated in a moral interest, less generalized, less sweeping. Apart from this change in the underlying hamartiology, to say that God has no need to be reconciled seems to imply that right and wrong are equivalents in God's sight; a conclusion much worse than an absurdity. The God who is all gentleness and grief, imploring sin-stained men to be at peace with Him, is not the God of the Bible, or of nature, or of fact; nor is He the God and Father of Jesus Christ. If atonement means anything, then in some true sense God is reconciled to man as well as man to God. And yet it is also Biblical, Christian, and true that the reconciliation which saves us is provided by the eternal goodwill of our loving God.

III

We now pass to post-Pauline formulation.

There is no need to argue that Hebrews (comp ii. 3) belongs to the second Christian generation, and we need not hesitate to affirm

that it makes the most decisive contribution in its period to the theology of Atonement. It is the first New Testament book to affirm plainly that Christ's death was a sacrifice,[1] that Christ was a high-priest, or even that Christ was a priest. Dr. Denney dwells in an almost querulous tone upon the difficulty of combining in one the thoughts of priest and of sacrifice. At least we may point out certain advantages arising from the doctrine. Such *self*-sacrifice excludes the old ugly associations connected with the thought of a human victim. And, again, it points towards those moral lines of explanation in which the strength of Christianity must always lie.

Hebrews concentrates upon Israel. Atonement is necessary "for the redemption of transgression under the first covenant" (ix. 15). There is a certain analogy here to what we have described as the clearest-cut of St. Paul's doctrines of Atonement, when he is paying tribute to the claims of law and is zealous for its divine honour. And yet Paul was the supreme apostle of Gentiles! Perhaps Hebrews is even more one-sided in its theology, though equally broad at heart; it knows that Christ "tasted death for every man" (ii. 9). How markedly does its technically narrowed doctrine

[1] Comp. *supra*, p. 66.

of Atonement contrast with another post-Pauline writing which records the description of Christ as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29, 36.) Hebrews will be unintelligible to us unless where we may regard it as the work of a Christian Jew addressing Christian Jews. And other considerations sufficiently establish that conclusion.

The epistle throws light upon a point which St. Paul never touches, viz., the question, What were Old Testament sacrifices designed to achieve? And further, What did they actually accomplish? Their actual result, we are taught, was to impart certain external privileges, characterized as "cleanness of the flesh." But their effort is taken to have been something far higher. They were not, according to this author, a yearly means of dealing with a year's sin. Rather they were a yearly renewed effort to get rid of guilt for good and all, and as such a yearly failure ("Else would they not have ceased to be offered?" x. 2)—an agelong discipline in despair. We cannot receive this as it stands, but it contains or implies most helpful truths.

Unfortunately, the author fails us at a vital point. Why should sacrifice—any sacrifice, ritual or spiritual—be a remedy for sin? That problem has not dawned on his horizon. It is

a matter of course to him, as a man of the antique world, that sin demands sacrifice. Jews and even Gentiles are sure of that. It is a matter of certainty to him, as a Christian, that the sacrifice of Christ is gloriously sufficient; but he has not subjected this central faith of his to intellectual analysis. The familiar fact, sacrifice, hid from him the problem — its rationale.[1]

Since he draws nothing from the hints of Isa. liii. regarding the Suffering Servant of the Lord, his theology has to find another luminous centre. This he discovers in the doctrine of Christ's high-priesthood, which he bases upon Ps. cx., and in the questions, What must a true priest be? And what qualities must he exhibit? Along this line—in the light of priesthood and not of sacrifice—the author of Hebrews develops a new moral-objective doctrine of the Christian Atonement. The true priest is Jesus the Son of God. The moral qualities requisite for a true priest are those qualities which we adore in Him. And thus the author of the epistle advances in one respect immensely beyond St. Paul. Paul quotes the sayings of Christ as words of final moral authority; but the earthly

[1] Of course the problem of sacrifice here and in the New Testament generally is the problem of sin-offering; and, when the Old Testament is consulted, special emphasis is bestowed on the Day of Atonement.

life of the Master disappears, and only the Crucifixion is emphasized. In Hebrews, on the contrary, the earthly life is recognized as the discipline which not merely led up to but made possible the atoning death; and our Lord is preached as One who lived, who suffered, who died His way into full life-giving fellowship with His perishing brethren; through whom therefore we live.

It is worth adding that another form or phase of moral-objective doctrine is found in 1 Peter. Further, that book, Hebrews, Revelation, and even Acts all agree in emphasizing redemption by blood, *i.e.* by sacrifice. With this teaching the later epistles of St. Paul also fall into line. We have, as it were, a combination of the Master's ransom doctrine with this new-covenant doctrine. And we have here the typical, central confession of Christian faith regarding the death of our Lord. What sacrifice *means* is a hard thing to define. The sacramental theology of developed Catholicism gives an answer which we can only deplore. Yet one is thankful, indeed, for the great Christian confession that the death of Christ is a holy thing, precious to God, and containing the gift of salvation towards all men. Redemption is known as accomplished not without

price, though certainly not through any such poor price as silver or gold. Redemption comes by sacrifice, the true spiritual sacrifice towards which the ritualism of temple-worship vaguely pointed. Christians have been bought at great cost; and so we are free.

CHAPTER V

Greek Church Theories, Exoteric and Esoteric

I

The first feature which impresses the modern reader when he contrasts the New Testament with post-Apostolic theology is the lack of grip which is shown by the Greek mind during the sub-Apostolic age. An honest attempt is made to echo the teaching of the Bible; but the effort fails. Something else involuntarily is substituted for the original. We may give this fact a high supernaturalist interpretation, and explain it by the contrast between the human and even the Christian mind uninspired, and the same inspired. Or we may feel safer in diagnosing the effects of ordinary historical forces. If so, we might find in the transition from a Jewish to a Gentile world of thought the cause of the dislocation in ideas. On this latter view, St. Luke—Gentile-born, but in close fellowship with St. Paul, yet unable to

keep entire touch with Pauline or any other Apostolic conception—might be considered a link between old and new, or a transitional form. And, while Christianity gained immensely by the vindication of the full rights of Gentile faith, it would seem to have lost not a little by breaking continuity with the disciplined piety which had been formed from infancy by the spirit of the Old Testament. It is as if God Almighty had had to begin afresh the religious education of the Church. It is as if long ages were required before average Christian experience could recover the profound personal piety which marks the best portions of the Old Testament and the minds moulded by its influence.

We cannot conceive that any Biblical writer would have allowed himself to pen the extraordinary sentence in which Clement of Rome records the salvation or justification of Rahab through "faith *and hospitality*." Clement is eager to echo the teachings of the founder of the Corinthian Church; yet how staggering is the contrast! Not merely the harder Pauline doctrines, but the central Christian experience of the grace of God, has grown opaque to Paul's admirer. Important as hospitality must be in its purest forms, faith admits no virtue whatever to share with it the mission of re-

ceiving from God's fullness the supply of man's emptiness and need.[1]

We are more in touch with the doctrine of Atonement when we turn to consider the attitude of Greek theology towards the doctrine of Christ's endurance as a curse. Here, it is true, we are reckoning with what is distinctively Pauline, and with what (within Paulinism itself) is circumferential rather than central—not to say, with some of the material "hard to be understood" which it is only too possible to "wrest" to one's own "destruction."[2] At the same time, there is no intention to set aside any of St. Paul's doctrines. Part of his teaching is neglected or misinterpreted, but his words are not consciously challenged or ever ignored. It has been remarked[3] that "Barnabas," Justin, Tertullian, and Cyril of Alexandria speak of Christ as "accursed" not by Divine decree but by wicked and malignant human enemies. In the passage from Barnabas it is a question of

[1] The Epistle to Diognetus stands much higher. Its evangelical strain is so distinct that suspicion has been aroused—quite in the teeth of the evidence—that it is a Protestant fabrication.

[2] 2 Peter iii. 15, 16. This passage from the latest of all the New Testament epistles is another interesting link or transitional form of thought. Paul remains authoritative, yet there are things in his teaching which are dark to the point of being perilous.

[3] Oxenham, *Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*, ch. ii.

interpreting the ritual of the scapegoat on the great Day of Atonement. The acuter problem raised by Pauline teaching, especially at Gal. iii. 13, is not faced. Justin, Tertullian, even Cyril[1] are bolder in glossing the strong words of the Apostle to suit their own belief.

On the other hand, we must always remember that the New Testament lives on, and exerts its unique influence both doctrinally and spiritually. In accordance with this, we find even the more startling Pauline teachings reproduced as a matter of exegetical loyalty by so representative a figure in Church History as Eusebius of Cæsarea.[2] Eusebius does not reinterpret the doctrine for himself. He does not, we may feel sure, live his way into it like Augustine or Luther in virtue of soul-shaking religious experiences. But the doctrine is there. It is safeguarded by scientific study. It is reaffirmed by the moderate orthodoxy of the age. Anything like genuine theological exploitation of the doctrine must come later. The problem is handed on, as an unsolved problem; but its elements are not forgotten.

[1] Comp. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Eng. trans., iii. p. 309.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

II

The great exoteric doctrine of Atonement in the Greek Church is the doctrine of ransom from the devil. We have seen material provided for such a doctrine in at least one of the more erratic passages of St. Paul. We say that material is provided, and we do not say that the doctrine is directly or truly Pauline; yet again and again one notices how Pauline passages tell on the minds of great Christian theologians, shaping or supporting a doctrine of the devil's rights. There are hints of this almost from the first. There is a fine early formula, to the effect that God in the salvation of man proceeds "by persuasion and not by the exercise of mere power." But this thought is capable of various interpretations, and it comes to be degraded into the affirmation of a bargain with the Evil One. Some of the very greatest Greek minds, *e.g.* Origen, are responsible for that baroque piece of theologizing. In the spacious intellect of the great Alexandrian, many different conceptions of the truth will find a welcome. He does not hold that all are of the same value. He does not place them all upon the same level as revelations for the initiated. It may even be questioned whether, upon what he conceives as

the very highest level, he keeps touch with historical Christianity at all. Yet, in a sense, the theology of a Ransom paid to Satan is for him a vital part of Christian truth.

Difficulties begin very soon indeed. Is Diabolus paid off? Or is Diabolus cheated in the end? How is it possible to hold that the Evil One is the better, or retains any permanent gratification, from the outpouring of his malice upon the Holy One of God? We assume for the moment, with the theory, that Christ was given up to Satan in Gethsemane or on the cross. And did not Resurrection speedily follow? Almost inevitably we are offered the odious corollary, that the Fiend was outwitted and the great deceiver deceived. By this time, the doctrine has become very different from an ascription of moral "persuasiveness" to the God of redemption. To supersede force by fraud would be a sorry piece of moral progress. Under the mythological form of a doctrine of the devil's rights, we recognize an attempt to teach that the claims of justice were somehow met in the sufferings of Christ. Has the attempt any success at all? What justice is left in the transaction if it comes, unavoidably, to rank as a clever trick?

It is unnecessary to labour the point that this first definite post-Biblical theology of Atone-

ment, while woven on the loom of the subtle Greek mind, came to enjoy widespread and long-continued popularity in the Christian West. Rivière, who displays much learning and no small amount of candour as a historian, seems rather too adroit in his handling of this special theory. He postpones it for separate treatment, and, when he turns to it, tries to segregate three distinct subordinate types—the "legal" theory of bargain or trick; the "poetical" or rhetorical theory; and the "political" theory which holds that the devil was the aggressor, that he exceeded all due rights, and that he was justly punished by losing the rights he had seemed to possess. The last type is supposed to reign alone in Augustine and in the greater names in post-Augustinian theology. Unfortunately, the alleged three types run into each other and cannot be held apart. Rivière himself confesses to doubts as to a single passage in Augustine, which—as he more than half fears—breaks through the fence and goes astray. What is much more important meets us in a different part of Rivière's full and careful study. The text-books habitually quote[1] the image of the "mouse-trap" baited with "blood" in the Crucifixion from the mediæval Master of the

[1] Even Dr. Denney, who had read Rivière carefully.

Sentences, Peter the Lombard. Rivière shows that this, the ugliest of many ugly images for enforcing the ill-starred theory, was really Augustine's coinage, occurring three times over in his Sermons, and repeated after him not merely by the Lombard (*c.* 1150) but by Hildebert of Tours earlier (1055–1134) and by Bonaventura (1221–74) a century later than Peter. A baited trap! What shadow of justice—what colourable divine dignity—can be associated with that odious image?

Happily, the nightmare passed. Minds so different as Anselm[1] and Abelard opened a raking fire of criticism; the devil never had any rights! Fierce resistance was shown, notably by St. Bernard;[2] but before long the new contention gained the day. Thomas Aquinas and later theology still speak of the devil's defeat as an aspect of Atonement; so long as there is serious belief in Diabolus, it would be impossible to say less than that. But we no longer hear either that the devil had rights or that the devil was outwitted. There

[1] In the *Cur Deus Homo* Anselm assigns the objections to Boso and tacitly admits them. We are told that he is more fully outspoken in other writings.

[2] There was a definable necessity for Christ's death if Diabolus had to be bought off; and some sort of definable necessity seems to be implied in every serious belief that Christ died for our sins.

is progress, then, even in theology! More, there is progress even within the mediæval period. The progress we are praising may be confined to the cancelling of a false start, yet that is true progress of a kind. The first clearly and sharply outlined theology of Atonement was intolerable to the enlightened conscience. It has ended in confessed bankruptcy.

Two closing reflections may be allowed. First, the disastrous effect of the attempt to interpret the Christian salvation in terms of the Evil One creates a presumption that the doctrine of evil spirits ought to form no part of Christian theology, and, if it is seriously admitted, is likely to work mischief. Secondly, it is not any and every alleged necessity for Christ's death which will issue in an admissible theology of Atonement. The theory of the devil's rights vanished when the rights were challenged and pronounced unfounded. But, at its best, the theory in question could only have explained Atonement as the removal of a single obstacle from the path which conducts the soul to safety. Its analysis made no attempt to exhibit a "prospective" necessitation. More still. Even if one were, for the argument's sake, to admit the existence of the devil's rights, one observes that the explanation of the Atonement as

meeting the devil's due claim breaks down and crumbles away. With endless reiteration, the theory assures us that the devil was *tricked.*

III

Along with the exoteric theory stands as a yet more characteristic product of the Greek-Christian mind the esoteric theory of *Recapitulatio.* This doctrine, though it has genuine Pauline affinities, is chiefly based on a misunderstood passage of Ephesians (i. 10). First clearly formulated by Irenæus, the doctrine received its most notable statement from Athanasius. In this deepest and frankest utterance of the Greek-Christian mind regarding Atonement, the emphasis rests by general admission not so much on the forgiveness of sins or on the renewal of the soul as upon deliverance from the doom of mortality. Such deliverance is held to be implied in the very birth of Jesus Christ as a Divine member of the human race. This mysticism finds one of its natural complements in sacramental doctrine. But the sacramental conception—I am still seeking to summarize views which are generally accepted—is not ethicized, even in the imperfect degree in which the sacramentalism of the Western Middle Ages gains ethical colouring.

When we are told that the conception of a "means of grace" is mediæval and not patristic, we are to understand that, for the Greek mind, sacraments do not convey a grace which enables us to acquire merit—unevangelical and not truly ethical as that thought is—but rather that the sacramental elucidation of Incarnation borders close upon nature-magic. We are saved by virtue and insight. Yes, but we are also saved—and in especial we are saved from mortality—by the wonder-working *φάρμακον ἀθανασίας*. And yet again, we are saved by the presence of Christ in humanity. The Incarnation, we may fairly say, is *itself the Atonement* for this mystical school of Greek thought. As teacher, or as Logos, Christ saves us by the gift of enlightenment and by supplying impulses towards virtue. But—a parallel line of supposed truth—Christ saves us as a ferment in humanity. The conception links up with sacraments, as the parallel conception of redemption by enlightenment and by virtue fails to do. But the sacramental gift is conceived physically, and hardly at all ethically.

Of course — notably in Athanasius — the thought of salvation is not presented in such bare outline as in our summary. The New Testament is still remembered. It is known that we are saved from the doom of death by

One who died for us. It is recognized that high divine necessities required the death of Christ. Such necessity is held to be constituted by the threat of punishment for disobedience, announced to Adam on his creation. God must keep His word. If the whole race of sinful man is not to die away into nothingness, or into some penal doom even more horrible than nonentity, there must be a death; and there has been the death of the Son of God in our room. Hence in Athanasius there is a curious approach to the traditional Protestant view of atonement as penal—a view which has numerous Catholic counterparts, and which rests upon a sharpening and hardening of certain Pauline teachings. Yet the two doctrines do not really coincide, any more than the assertion that Christ died to fulfil the predictions of the Old Testament carries us to a basal moral necessity. For Athanasius, Christ died because God had threatened it; according to the penal theory, Christ died because the very nature of God required punishment as a preliminary to forgiveness, and—as personal punishment must eternally crush and destroy the sinner, even if penitent—God's nature required the wonderful vicarious punishment of the Son of God. With all reverence towards the great Alexandrian hero, one must hold that his doctrine of the

death of Christ is a detachable supplement to his central train of thought, and that it points merely to a relative, precarious, indefinite need for the sacrifice of Calvary. Even for Athanasius, the heart of Christianity is the mystic incarnation of the Logos. His doctrine of the death of Christ is a Biblical afterthought. It partially corrects his habitual and instinctive views, but not more than partially. We must record it to his honour that he does not eke out his difficult doctrine by drawing upon the popular mythological scheme. He represents characteristic Eastern Christianity in its worthiest shape, though with clear enough traces of its limitations.

It would be possible to dwell upon Athanasius's defects as a theologian at much greater length. For instance, one might quote a passage upon which Dr. Denney fastens—the passage where Athanasius raises the question, why Christ should not have paid "the debt" due to death *as soon as* He had entered into human life, and finds himself greatly embarrassed for an answer. Still, every one-sided doctrine of the death of Christ in isolation from the life is liable to the same embarrassment, if it does not always reveal it with the same frankness and candour. We must regard it as a symptom of profound theological and religious

defects, but it is in no sense peculiarly Athanasian or peculiarly Eastern. There is a suggestion of it in the silences of St. Paul, for whom the earthly life of the Master means so little. We have it complete in a modern hymn-writer, who roundly tells us that Christ "lived—to die." Not without reason have we described Athanasius's Biblical afterthought as only a partial correction of the defects of his system.

Of course the mysticism of the Eastern Church, as well as its more mythological scheme, lives on and passes into the West. But, in Western teaching, this higher train of thought is always a sporadic peculiarity of individual minds; and it always bears the marks of a loan from alien sources. In no sense does it hold the field.

Are we safe in grouping the material of this chapter as we have done? Mr. J. K. Mozley challenges and denounces the accepted view of Eastern Catholic teaching in regard to Atonement. His very able book is made difficult by a disposition to quarrel with every generalization. A word is not a word; it is a congeries of individual trees. Neither what we have called the exoteric nor what we have called the esoteric doctrine of the Eastern Church regarding Atonement is to be treated as insignificant! Partly, one gathers, Mr.

Mozley would have us lay emphasis upon the occasional reverent reproduction of Biblical forms of speech. And partly, perhaps, he would have us await the later development of an earnest theology, wrestling with thoughts almost too great for utterance. The patristic age is to be interpreted in the light of what came before it or what was to follow, rather than in the light of its own most distinctive utterances. We believe that our rapid summary has done sufficient justice to the Biblical thread that runs through all the erratic speculations of the Greek fathers. For the rest, it must suffice to quote Dr. Denney:[1] "The question remains . . . as to the relation between the Scripture language or the Scripture ideas such writers employ and the general trend of their thoughts. It is not easy to avoid the impression that as far as their minds had unity —as far as they really aimed at self-consistency—the Greek fathers were as a whole under the ban of their Logos philosophy. That was the vital thing for them when their minds moved spontaneously." It "unquestionably preponderates." Accordingly, we conclude that what Mr. Mozley forbids is inevitable, if speech is not to be muzzled and thought paralysed. The strange doctrinal formulations on Atone-

[1] *Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 35.

ment, which characterize the early age, do not stand alone. They are accompanied by Biblical echoes. But they are more deeply significant than these, and more eminently characteristic of their time.

It would not be right to leave unnoticed a suggestion made by Principal Franks, that the theology of the East contains another implicit or potential doctrine of Atonement in connexion with the sacrament of baptism. With no small Biblical warrant, that sacrament was regarded as conveying forgiveness of sins. If, then, Christ *died* for our sins, it must be the death of Christ which imparts such peculiar efficacy to Christian baptism. Yet is not such a doctrine, in Eastern Catholicism, an unrealized possibility? Do not the facts prove this? And does not logical necessity require it to be so? Baptism bestows, according to Catholicism, the first and greatest Divine forgiveness. Nay, more than this. Many Catholic minds, ancient and modern, have approached very near the position of rigorist "heresy," that baptism conveys the one forgiveness, or at any rate the only forgiveness that is assured. But baptism comes to be administered to helpless and unconscious infants. Out of such a rite, it is impossible to extract any reasonable or ethical

doctrine regarding the dealings of God with men in His economy of redemption. How the thought of redemption came to be in a sense ethicized, and yet how the interpretation of that great thought still followed distinctively sacramental lines, we must try to learn in our next chapter.

Here we reach a great landmark. We are now definitely turning our faces from the East to the West, and from the study of Greek Catholic piety to the Latin piety of Europe or of North Africa.

CHAPTER VI

Starting-point and Drift of Western Catholic Doctrine

It may be said in praise of Western Christianity as a whole that it reveals a truer sympathy with the ethical principles and emphasis of the New Testament than can be discovered in the theology of the East. On the other hand, Western Catholicism from the outset lacks the thought of true moral necessity, and its progressive evolution more and more imperils the central glories of the Gospel. Sacramental theology with its mysteries, and Church discipline with its relative and uncertain standards, first occupied the field. When a theology of Atonement did come into being, it was shaped and moulded by these compromising influences.

We have to begin by recalling the question, How is man to be forgiven? We know the leading Catholic answer: Man is forgiven at his baptism. But baptism has come to be administered habitually to unconscious infants; therefore the answer is sterile for the interpreta-

tion of atonement. For a time it seemed possible that this was to be not only the leading but the exclusive assertion of Catholicism in regard to forgiveness. Considerable sections of early Christian opinion—with a clear measure of encouragement from portions of the New Testament, *e.g.* Hebrews, though not, one thinks, without discouragement from other sections of the New Testament, *e.g.* from St. Paul—refused to admit the sure hope of any second forgiveness after grave sin. Yet so characteristic a specimen of rigorist Christianity as Tertullian, who ultimately adhered to Montanism, gave an immense impulse to the theological or disciplinary regulation of the forgiveness of *lesser* post-baptismal sins. And, as the Catholic system slowly developed towards a "sacrament of penance," with its three finally recognized ingredients — contrition, auricular confession, satisfaction—it only made more plain what was contained *in nuce* in the glowing but fierce and bitter piety of the brilliant African.

Satisfaction and merit, and perhaps in a sense punishment, were conditions of being forgiven and of assuring oneself of the favour of God. Out of these disciplinary conceptions, in course of time, interpretations of the Atonement were to be drawn. Not the first and greatest forgiveness, but the secondary forgiveness of average

sin-stained Christian lives, came to afford what passed as a clue to the work of Christ, the supreme manifestation of the grace of God. But all that is of later growth. Primarily, the bases of Western thought are disciplinary and legal. The central term is Satisfaction. Along with Satisfaction we must not fail to keep in view the thought of Merit, whether we are dealing with the theory of discipline or with the theology of Atonement. Punishment is much less definitely involved in the texture of Catholic thought, yet it is not wholly absent.

The Starting-point.—Most terms in philosophy and religion have had prehistoric existence in other regions of the human mind. Tertullian was trained as a lawyer. It has been disputed whether his professional bias did much to imprint the character of legalism upon the theology of Western Catholicism. The legal currents may have been strong enough to force their way, independently of special personal leadership. Yet, even if Tertullian is not a cause, he is highly significant as a symptom of the spirit of his age, and as a prophecy of evolving Catholic beliefs.

Moreover, it turns out curiously that the legal term "satisfaction" in its most precise and technical use by the Roman lawyers referred to that "private" law which regulated

the relation of individual to individual. Accordingly, "satisfaction" in its pre-theological days implied something relative, partial, arbitrarily accepted rather than that "full, true, and proper" satisfaction of which Protestant Articles of Religion speak. Those who have to do with education come to be familiar with the heading, "Satisfied the Examiner." The phrase is far from connoting a performance which is everything that the examiners' hearts could crave. Rather, the performance will just serve—it will pass muster! Similar implications attach to "satisfaction" in Roman law. *Solvere* and not *satisfacere* is the proper technical expression for the true and exact discharge of a liability. In a less precise sense, say our authorities,[1] any claim adequately met according to law may be described as "satisfied." But the main usage denotes a bare legal sufficiency in contrast to a full discharge of what is owing. One might say that, in *strict* usage, satisfaction means a *non-strict* payment. It means a partial discharge, "accepted" as equivalent to a complete discharge.

Of course words are slippery things. This element of inexactness—*quasi*-satisfaction rather than full satisfaction—is not constant in theo-

[1] Franks, relying upon Hermann Schultz in *Studien und Kritiken*, who in his turn relies upon help given him by a legal colleague, Professor Merkel.

logical usage. One observes that in the *Cur Deus Homo*[1] the words *satisfacere* and *solvere* are precise synonyms. Again, the Protestant doctrine of satisfaction implies beyond shadow of doubt full discharge of the inexorable claims of law. Strangely enough, Grotius the lawyer bethinks himself—when in his own fashion he is "defending" the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction—that *satisfacere* is not the same thing as *solvere*, and Mr. Mozley points out that he is echoed in this by Richard Baxter. "After Last returns the First, though a wide compass round be fetched." So long as penitential satisfactions are contemplated, not even the dullest conscience could suppose that these are "full, true, and proper."

Merit itself, we are told, was a term with legal antecedents, both as good desert and as ill desert. And the interesting question is raised by Schultz, how merit and satisfaction are related to each other in Catholic thought. Obviously, the Catholic theologians have not discussed the question. We have to raise it for ourselves. Schultz answers that Merit is the genus and Satisfaction a particular species. With a certain reserve, Principal Franks concurs. He holds that punishment must also come into the reckoning. In satisfaction there

[1] Bk. I. ch. xx. *et al.*

is a penal, or—we might say—a *quasi*-penal element. Still, upon the whole, Satisfaction *is* a "kind" of merit.

This finding startles one. Merit creates a Plus; satisfaction obliterates a Minus. How can the two be brought together? Yet, when one reads Schultz or Franks with due care, difficulty practically vanishes; for the explanations we require meet us at one point or another, if perhaps hardly with such clearness or emphasis as we might have desired. The whole system presupposes that man can put God into his debt. If man has previously incurred debt to God by acts of sin, his newly achieved good works or meritorious sufferings liquidate the Minus. If he has a clean slate at the time, his new merit stands as a Plus. If he has a credit balance, the balance is swelled. Schultz quotes abundantly to show that satisfaction is not regarded by the Catholic mind as of the nature of punishment, and argues that therefore it *must* be of the nature of merit. Franks, however, points out that the things which rank as meritorious—either in Tertullian's age, or with modification later—are, all or most of them, self-inflicted sufferings. Guided by this hint, we were careful to include "meritorious sufferings" as well as "good works" when we named the things which Catholicism

held to avail for the penitent sinner's profit. Obviously, the penal element here is of the nature of *quasi*-punishment rather than that true, deserved punishment which God requires and exacts. What Christian conscience is so dulled as to believe that personal sufferings have atoned in full for moral guilt? We are in the Catholic world of relative necessities. Shifting and wavering standards encompass us, and baffle us. This is the case with equal plainness whether we view satisfaction as a "kind" of merit or as a "kind" of punishment.

It is no less plain in regard to Merit as such. The thought is a bad one, undermining the conscience. "When ye have done all, say We are servants; we have done what it was our duty to do."[1] But a further complication discloses itself. The Catholic mind, working upon Catholic premises, sought to find in merit something beyond what is fully due—something supererogatory; the thought if not the word occurs already in Tertullian and even before him, in Hermas. Yet loosely, in the general contrast of "good desert" with "ill desert," plain obedience to God's law, or the endurance of *quasi*-penal sufferings on the sinner's part, is given the lofty name of merit. Historical

[1] Luke xvii. 10, finely amended by Wellhausen after the Syriac Version by omission of the harsh epithet "unprofitable."

Protestantism refuses to admit the conception of merit in us, if only because of our sin. And that is well, though still insufficient. All serious moral judgment must reject a point of view which destroys moral necessity and subverts moral dependence. But, if we were to admit the thought, let it be real merit! There is further mischief still in a *quasi*-merit; wavering, arbitrary, hollow.

The Catholic Development of Legalism.— What is true of the starting-point of Western Catholic thought becomes more and more fully true in the ages during which Catholicism is spinning its web and drawing out its inferences. The half morality of the Catholic ethic is not static. It is not given once for all. It develops, it grows—from bad to worse. And, in course of time, everything—to borrow an expression used by A. B. Bruce in criticizing Mansel — becomes *quasi.* Each category is cut down from its proper identity. Catholic piety is more and more encouraged by its chiefs to still its hunger with *Ersatz*[1] productions—were that ever possible.

God requires faith, and "without faith it is impossible to please Him." The Catholic mind makes this requirement into a legal demand, and turns faith from meaning humble

[1] Anglicé "substitute."

trust in God and in the victory of goodness into meaning assent to the Church's dogmas. When this change in the meaning of the word has been established, it is no longer possible to hold that in any true sense faith is God's whole requirement. As Dr. Charles Beard remarked in his Hibbert Lectures, we could never consent to speak of "justification by belief" as Christians do gladly of "justification by faith." And yet, for modern Catholicism, the two are precise synonyms. For ages the impression of the New Testament doctrine of grace produced its natural effect upon minds that lived in the central stream of Catholic piety. *Sola fide* is no novel Protestant war-cry. From Ambrosiaster to St. Bernard, and possibly beyond these limits, it meets us again and again. On the finished and precise Catholic view, faith is "dogmatic" faith and is a part of God's requirement. We have to *add* to faith by an external union other things which rank as meritorious—penances and good works.

And then comes the usual degradation. Faith is not to survive unmutilated, even in the strange disguise of assent to dogmas. The *Ersatz* form of "implicit faith" may suffice for many purposes, for most, almost for all. He who hands his blank cheque to the Church, and believes with the Church, is held *by implication*

whatever the Church teaches. It then becomes a work of mercy on the Church's part to cut down the amount of dogma which must be known and approved by the individual in order to his winning salvation; and theologians vie with each other in making the list of necessary truths shorter and shorter. If the question can be raised at all, how much the saved soul needs to know, the question is strictly one between the soul and the God who has made and who has redeemed it.[1] Utterly to be desired are fullness of experience and depth of conviction, that "we may know the things which are freely given to us by God." Poor and inadequate as our best explanations must be, Christian faith is a unity. By implication, a very narrow circle of known truths, a very dim apprehension of their grounds and of their force, suffices to bring an empty soul into relation to all the fullness of God. That is true faith, in its extreme weakness, but also in its inestimable preciousness. Such "implication" of belief is a very different thing from mechanically saying "ditto" to the Church and to the hierarchy.

If there is anything to be added to faith, though in truth it cannot be separated therefrom, God requires repentance. And accord-

[1] Catholicism is of course in an unhappy plight, and *cannot* "leave it at that."

ingly contrition of heart appears as one-third of the contents of the developed sacrament of penance. But again the *quasi*-merciful process is set in motion, and *quasi*-repentance is approved as a substitute for true spiritual sorrow on account of sin and true self-devotion to a new life. Attrition as well as contrition is among the psychological possibilities; and scholastic ingenuity will establish, to its own satisfaction, that regret based on selfish motives may initiate a process leading straight on to eternal salvation. A repentance which is no repentance may do the work of genuine repentance.

I am not able to report any progressive weakening in the usage of the word "satisfaction."[1] Perhaps indeed we shall rather discover a strengthening in significance—whether solid or precarious—when the term is definitely extended by Anselm to the work of Christ. The Church follows Anselm's lead, at least in word, and perseveres in the usage to this day. But Satisfaction is always associated with the companion term Merit; and in regard to Merit the wonted process goes cheerfully forward. New distinctions are set up between different

[1] Sometimes, in tentative fashion, the dangerous distinctions which we shall presently note in the doctrine of merit spread to the doctrine of satisfaction.

kinds of merit, and lend themselves to new processes of attenuation and evasion. So far as our guides inform us, the new distinctions are not brought into relation with the original embarrassment whereby Merit, properly a supererogatory goodness, is made to include common dutifulness and even common law-abiding decency of behaviour. The new casuistical apparatus goes back to Alexander of Hales, whose importance in the history of mediæval thought appears to be one of the discoveries of recent study. It makes a difference whether with Ritschl[1] one passes straight from Anselm and Abelard to St. Thomas, or whether one notes how very far the process of watering down the thought of moral necessity had been carried by St. Anselm's successors and how largely Aquinas stands for a reaction, effective or ineffective, towards better things. Yet the casuistical refinements or corruptions, once introduced, are never truly set aside within Catholicism. Merit *de condigno*—true merit, which really is meritorious—is flanked continuously after Alexander's time by *Ersatz* merit, merit *de congruo*. Very different amounts of room and scope may be given by different schoolmen to merits *de congruo* in the career of sinners who are being saved with help

[1] Dr. Denney still adopts the same treatment.

from the Church's means of grace. It is hard for a non-expert to ascertain how much is assigned even by St. Thomas. But the general state of the case is clear. There is a merit which is meritorious, and there is another merit which is only *quasi*-meritorious. And inevitably the cheaper type tends to encroach upon the costlier, as, according to Gresham's law, bad money drives out good. One says it again—the intelligent Protestant has no interest in asserting any doctrine of merit at all. But it is a fresh injury to the Christian faith on the part of Catholicism when, having corrupted the Gospel by the thought of merit, Catholicism goes on to corrupt and adulterate that very thought of merit with which it professes to work; just as we have seen it corrupting its own inadequate and unworthy conception of faith.

The degradation of "merit" is pretty well completed in Thomas's great rival, Duns Scotus, champion, as his admirers think, of the "primacy of the will." However his phraseology may be turned—and Duns retains even the term "satisfaction," though the thought is far from him—Duns carries back merit to "acceptation." This is true of every kind of merit—highest as well as lowest, genuine merit as well as *quasi*-merit. The Divine will or

wilfulness makes it what it is. There is no objective standard whatever.

A verbal difficulty must delay us for a short time.[1] "Acceptilation" has been largely confused by theologians with "acceptation." It appears that both are technical terms of Roman law. Etymologically, they do not seem to differ one whit. "Acceptation" is the act of authority, or of the injured private person, receiving, perhaps at a fictitious valuation, what is offered. *Acceptilatio* is the act of the guilty subject or guilty neighbour, presenting that which (he thankfully learns) will graciously be accepted as a compensation for wrong inflicted. But, while the words are etymologically identical, or differ only in the point of view, usage has exerted its influence and has desynonymized. According to Roman legal precedents, "acceptation" means something for nothing; the formula in place of the fact and as good as the fact. A "peppercorn rent" might be said to be a specimen of acceptation. Its value is practically null. "Acceptation" is defined by usage as the imputing of an exaggerated value to that which has a real but an insufficient value; treating a payment on account as a full discharge. "Ninepence for

[1] I borrow Principal Franks' learning again; chiefly from articles in Dr. Hastings' *ERE*.

fourpence" might be acceptilation; it could not be acceptation. It is acceptation with which Duns makes such havoc of theological conceptions. Too often he is said to operate with "acceptilation." Strangely enough, the great lawyer Grotius made the slip of imputing a doctrine of "acceptilation" to Duns and Socinus. Their doctrine ascribed not something, but everything, to arbitrary Divine will. Is it at all wonderful that lesser minds should have been misled by Grotius? Or is there any reason why more ink should be spilt in a purely technical and antiquarian controversy? Whether the process be named correctly, or incorrectly; whether it be styled "acceptation" or "acceptilation"; it implies a "merit" in which real moral deservingness is reduced to little or to nothing at all.

The same weakening, the same wavering, meets us in regard to grace; and here again the dangerous scholastic distinctions go back to Alexander. He it is who formulates the contrast between the *quasi*-grace of *gratia gratis data* and the genuine or efficacious grace of *gratia gratum faciens*. The terminology assuredly is strange. One might have affirmed with confidence that the very essence or form of grace was to be a "free gift"—*gratis data*. However, in mediæval

language, *gratia gratis data* is that which has *only* the quality of being a free gift of God's undeserved goodness. It is pretty well identical with those general movements of the Holy Spirit of which Calvinism heartlessly enough speaks; for Calvinism unambiguously regards "general" grace as inevitably barren; and mediæval Augustinianism cannot escape similar beliefs, though it may and does seek refuge in evasive and ambiguous phrases. *Gratia gratum faciens* is, according to Alexander and the Catholic Church following him, grace indeed. It also is free, except in so far as doctrines of merit encroach on the evangelical faith of Christendom. But its freeness is not its main glory. It adds higher gifts. It is sacramental in kind and saving in effect, for the sacrament becomes a "means of grace" enabling the sinner to acquire merits, whether genuine and literal, or ranking as such by arbitrary Divine decree.

Possibly the differences between Calvinism and the mediæval sacramentalism are in favour of the latter. Calvinism has the advantage in respect of logical clearness and frankness; mediævalism has the advantage of endeavouring to assert justice in God, or to disguise the essential injustice involved in its creed. *Quasi*-merit (*de congruo*) and *quasi*-grace (*gratis data*)

are alike efforts to show how there may be hope for a man who does his best and is faithful in a few things. Unfortunately, if they succeed, they do but teach that from unworthy and selfish beginnings we may go straight on to a good hope of eternal salvation. Neither Calvinism with its catastrophic doctrine of the new life, nor sacramentalism which proposes to "crib" grace "by inches," has light to impart to a conscience that has caught even a glimpse of the Christ of God. Plainly, from motives it regards as merciful, mediæval theology will incline to make more of the lesser grace—the *gratis data* in its peculiarly limited sense. And so an *Ersatz* grace is found to match the *Ersatz* merit *de congruo*.[1]

Transition to the Doctrine of the Work of Christ.—Long before Anselm, fugitive efforts have been made to interpret the work of Christ as a legal satisfaction; according to the English translation of Harnack's larger *Dogmengeschichte*, the suggestion is found once in Tertullian and once in Cyprian. Apparently,[2] both statements are erroneous, though in one case the error seems to be the translator's,

[1] It is arguable that the mischief was partly done by Augustine himself, and that *gratia co-operans* in its contrast with *gratia operans* is a thought destructive of entire dependence upon God in Christ.

[2] Foley, *Anselm's Theory of the Atonement*, pp. 81 n., 84 n.

while the great foreign scholar seems to be himself responsible for the other. The whole matter is of less consequence in view of the fact, made so conspicuous by Principal Franks, that Hilary and Ambrose both tried to follow this legal line of speech, using "satisfaction" in the vaguer sense of fulfilling or discharging a claim, but also using it in that reference to public law which—almost by necessary implication, and frequently in plain terms—regards the sufferings of Christ as penal. These early attempts all came to nothing. It was reserved for Anselm to commend the position in his own fashion, and to establish it for all the future of Western Catholicism, though assuredly not without limitations. In the mind of Anselm himself, "satisfaction" is objective and is absolute. He believes in a real need for a real satisfaction to God's honour.

On the other hand, satisfaction in Anselm's thought has nothing to do with punishment. As the necessity for satisfaction is absolute, the disjunction too is treated as absolute—*either* satisfaction *or* punishment must follow on sin. And yet, even in Anselm, satisfaction is interpreted as, in a sense, paid to the righteousness as well as to the personal honour of God. Implicitly, this view of things suggests a con-

nexion with punishment.) And, when the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction meets with general acceptance, penal or *quasi*-penal interpretations accompany it in influential utterances of mediæval theology. Peter Lombard speaks of *condigna satisfactio*.[1] Thomas Aquinas speaks of Christ's *superabundans satisfactio*,[2] but the *satisfactio* is also *pœnalis*. And in sinful man, if finally lost, *pœna satisfactoria* will be exhibited.

Another curious quotation adduced by Foley,[3] whom Mozley follows, reveals a full-blown penal doctrine of atonement in Pope Innocent III., who explicitly speaks of the harmony between justice and mercy established in the death of Christ. The climax of all this is found rather in the theology of the Reformers than in any mediæval scholasticism. Or it is found in popular irresponsible Roman preaching, which can be used to stir the multitudes and disowned when inconvenient notice is taken of its extravagances.

[1] As quoted by Schultz. Schultz, however, argues that the words do not really bear their full or proper meaning in the Lombard.

[2] As quoted by Schultz. Denney quotes *pœnæ satisfactoriæ* from the decrees of Trent, applied to penances.

[3] *Anselm's Theory of the Atonement*, p. 215, following Neander. The passage is from Innocent's first *Sermon*; but this only slightly lessens its significance.

The *merit* of Christ is affirmed in all quarters of mediæval thought, but seems nowhere to be so deliberately analysed and theorized as satisfaction is in the pages of St. Anselm. It is by accident, half unconsciously, that the *Cur Deus Homo* glides from its analysis of Christ's satisfaction into insistence upon the great "merit" which avails for all who "follow" Christ's "example." Ritschl's attack upon this, as a piece of careless thinking, seems overdone. Both thoughts are urged irresistibly upon the Western Catholic mind by their place in the theory of discipline.

And, in spite of Anselm's gallant effort to reach deeper and surer foundations, Catholic discipline familiarizes men with the relative necessity of *quasi*-satisfactions, of *quasi*-merits, of *quasi*-punishments. Moreover, as we have noted, the changes which occur in the progress of Catholic thought tend increasingly to weaken positions which were already precarious. The house is built upon the sand. When the storm comes, it must fall, and the fall of that house will be great.

CHAPTER VII

Anselm on Satisfaction to the Divine Honour

Athwart the agelong process of Catholicism, which starting from weak and wavering moral conceptions tends to make them ever more intensely wavering and ever more profoundly weak, strikes with sudden and strange power the theory of the *Cur Deus Homo.* Anselm stands without hesitation for the absolute moral necessity of an absolute and true satisfaction for sin—without hesitation, though not indeed without traces of inconsistency.) He is a Saint in the Roman calendar; but his success in establishing his own views as normative was curiously limited. The term "satisfaction" is in the limelight; Anselm consciously vindicates it; and he succeeds in imposing it upon Catholic[1] and even upon classical Protestant

[1] Laberthonnière, the French modernist, is told by Rivière that he may try his desired restatement on atonement if he likes. "Satisfaction" is not yet *de fide.* The Vatican Council could not complete its projected definitions. Evidently, however, Rivière regards Laberthonnière's wish as rash and presumptuous.

theology. What had been suggested before indirectly, fugitively, unsuccessfully, is now deliberately and one might think finally achieved. But with that attainment the work of Anselm as a legislator comes to an end. Absolute necessity of the satisfaction made by Christ is denied by practically all St. Anselm's Catholic successors. The high authority of St. Augustine, who denied the absolute necessity of Atonement, obliterates St. Anselm's doctrine. The characteristic ethos of Catholicism is too strong to be shaken.

It is the honour, not the penal justice of God, which Anselm regards as demanding and receiving satisfaction. In the *Cur Deus Homo* penal interpretations are not merely avoided but excluded by the course of the argument. Other works of Anselm's are quoted in which he uses the indefinite yet traditional language that recognizes penalty in Christ's death; but in all fairness we are bound to interpret Anselm on the lines of his deliberate theory and not in the light of his devotional rhetoric. Divine justice is not said to receive "satisfaction," according to St. Anselm. That position is Protestant rather than Anselmic. At the same time, Anselm's conception of what God's honour claims becomes more emphatic and also more dignified because of occasional references

to the justice of God. It is best to say, with Ritschl, that Anselm conceives Christ as satisfying a claim put forward by God Most High as an individual, acting under the conditions of private law. Yet here, as so often, our ready-made categories do not exactly fit the facts. It is partly a professional claim which God raises; but partly too it is the claim of abstract righteousness. God "will not be just to Himself"[1] if He waives the requirement of satisfaction; one is tempted to render "He will not be *fair* to Himself"; but such a gloss misses out exactly the significant element. In later generations, Anselm's thinking tells in favour of a satisfaction rendered, in some sense, to justice. But the wavering conception of justice with which Anselm operates weakens the connotation of the term even while it gives it vogue. We cannot but hold him partially responsible, against his will and intention, for lowering the thought of justice into *quasi*-justice.

While it is certain that Anselm's thought is moulded by disciplinary practice, other things have been suggested as helping to give him his clue. It has been strongly asserted—and as strongly denied—that Anselm's legal and moral standards are a direct inheritance from the primeval beliefs and customs of Germany.

[1] Bk. I. ch. xiii.

Here, as so often, we must recognize "plurality of causes." Each of these—disciplinary practice in the Church, tribal usages in the State—may have suggested to St. Anselm the possibility and the necessity of satisfaction for sin. Indeed, we may very well have to go further, and to recognize "intermixture of effects." It is quite possible that both influences were at work. If so, it is a subject of antiquarian rather than of theological interest in what proportion the two streams of tendency co-operated to form St. Anselm's thought.[1]

Anselm himself interprets more boldly. He thinks that he is building upon genuine moral intuitions—*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*; Christians, Jews, or Pagans! Such assumptions are unhelpful. Even those who are most thoroughly convinced of the presence of an almost intuitional continuum in the moral judgments of mankind will hesitate to-day before adopting so bald and unhistorical a view as old-fashioned intuitionism. In a world where all things move and change, the thoughts of men, *even* regarding the deepest things—or perhaps *most of all* regarding the deepest things—will not stagnate. It is enough, and

[1] It is difficult not to think that Germanic ideas are at work in the assumption that the guilty person *or some other of his stock* must "satisfy."

more than enough, that thought should grow, showing itself deeper, truer, and worthier as ages pass. We will not despise Anselm's desire to convince "Jews and Pagans"; but we have no relish for his naïve assumption that converts are to bring with them their Jewish and Pagan ethic, unchanged, when they enter the kingdom of God.

Disciplinary satisfactions introduce the atmosphere of the relative and the conventional wherever their influence tells. In Anselm, however, there is a very curious kind of rivalry between Christ's satisfaction and the sinner's own. He states them as alternatives. In order to vindicate a necessity for Christ's work, Anselm has to sweep away the sinner's fancied capacity for putting himself right with God. He does so very trenchantly.[1] No part of his dialogue stands upon a higher level of ethical, of Christian, one might almost say of Protestant insight. Certainly to a Protestant reader it will seem plain that Anselm has destroyed for good and all the dream of personal satisfaction by man or of personal merit in him.

At the same time, this is not Anselm's own thought. The curious little parable of the injured king,[2] who is willing—after suitable satisfaction has been offered on behalf of the

[1] Bk. I. ch. xx.

[2] Bk. II. ch. xvi.

guilty, and has been accepted—to prove himself placable not once merely but many times, slips in as matter of course the lesser satisfactions which have to be made by the penitent on each occasion of confessed and forgiven (post-baptismal) sin. *Remoto Christo*, man can do nothing to better his evil case; but, let Christ the Saviour have suffered for sins—the strange situation arises that the second-rate and ineffectual satisfactions of sinful men are desired and welcomed by the God of Catholic piety.

The case is similar in regard to Merit. Though the "twin conception" is never placed in the centre of the stage, we cannot doubt that, as Anselm was a good Catholic in regard to secondary disciplinary satisfactions, so he must have been a good Catholic in regard to the merits of the redeemed children of men. Even the most poignant sense of the need of a Saviour's work does not deliver any Catholic mind from that compromise between law and grace which avoids the manifest dangers of extreme views on either side, but—misses the truth. As Principal Franks tells us, Biel the late nominalist schoolman can only have blurted out the inevitable result of mediæval theology when he taught in plain terms that Christ's merits needed and found their supplement in the merits of Christ's

people. We are far from this point in Anselm, but we are recognizably on the way thither.

As yet we have been dealing with the Protestant view of this part of Anselm's work. For the Catholic view we may turn to Rivière. He quotes and endorses Roman Catholic opinion to the effect that Anselm overshoots the mark in reckoning all that men could possibly do or bear for God as matter of strict obligation. For the Catholic mind, certain forms of self-discipline—including some of those explicitly mentioned by Anselm—are "supererogatory" and afford a basis for merit in the strictest sense. Nor does one see how sober Catholic criticism can fail to insist upon this correction of Anselm—one more proof that, as we have already put it, his insight is so deeply Christian as to carry him right into the Protestant world of thought. Yet he hardly tarries there for any length of time. Nor is it to be supposed that Protestantism endorses everything said by Anselm in these higher moods. It is almost unbearable rigorism to affirm that the Christian ought to allow himself no pleasure except such as may help him heavenwards. The ethical "must" is a great reality, but it is fanatical to blot out everything else from the life of a Christian.

Nevertheless, the first reason for Anselm's

doctrine of moral necessity in Atonement may be recognized here—in the solemn and rightful severity of his moral judgment. The sane and healthy exercise of his Christian conscience put him upon the track of a conception of transcendent value—the conception of a moral necessity which is equivalent to the highest freedom. One ought not to need to add—this necessity has nothing whatever to do with physical compulsion. It is purely moral. Of God it is written that "He cannot deny Himself." Anselm would confirm the assertion that the impossibility alleged is no diminution of divine omnipotence, but its glory. Nor of a man, the child of God, can we conceive any worthier manifestation of real moral freedom than in the words—historically true, or traditional invention truer still to the inner situation—"Here I stand: I can do no otherwise; so help me God."

Unfortunately, we shall have to note that Anselm was unable to retain this grand conception in all its splendour. Perhaps he never grasped it in clear thought. If we take his definition of moral obligation to be "what we *owe* to God," he is at the centre of things, and his apprehension is normal, deep, and sound. If we ought rather to think of him as insisting on "what we owe *to God*," there may be some

doubt as to the value of the position. The latter is what the mediæval world of private personal claims might suggest to a mediæval theologian. And the mediæval taint leads Anselm to balance and contrast the personal claims of God with the needs of God's universe. Such a claim, so defined, can be no matter of true moral necessity, but rather the apotheosis of sovereign caprice. Still, in his rebuke of frivolous moral judgment—never a rare fault, but probably never so worked into a system of thought or so blended with the atmosphere of life as under Catholicism—Anselm has uttered a protest which deserves to be held in grateful remembrance till the end of time.

A second motive for Anselm's doctrine of the necessity for satisfaction is his grave estimate of sin. Formally, this estimate may be affected for the worse by defects in his conception of God. He thinks of God too much as if He were the Sultan of heaven. When he is teaching Boso "how grave a matter sin is,"[1] he bases his argument on a comparison between the infinite magnitude of Deity and the merely finite magnitude of "whatever is not God." This might be no more than an erroneous form of thought or

[1] Bk. I. ch. xxi.

speech. It is perhaps a graver error when Anselm adopts the wonted language of hamartiology, and speaks of sinful humanity as if it consisted of one gigantic being who has had full opportunity of choosing the better part and who has deliberately incurred moral impotence. One may doubt whether conscience will ever plead guilty to this accusation, from whatever quarter it may be urged.

On the other hand, it appears doubtful whether Anselm thought quite as gravely of sin as it deserves. "No one," he says in a curious aside, "could possibly wish to kill God"[1] — *i.e.* knowingly; the death of the Deus Homo, with all its blissful results, came about on the human side because His true nature was unperceived. One might be inclined rather to say that every deliberate sin —and there is something of deliberateness in every fault which is imputable as sin at all— wishes to strike down out of the sinner's way the will, the righteousness, the very love of God. For God stands between man and his evil desire. And therefore every one who loves sin would kill God, if he could. As the fool says in his heart, "There is no God," the evil-doer says in his life, "Let there be none."

[1] Bk. I. ch. xv.

A third ground for Anselm's seriousness of moral judgment is his sense of the greatness and glory of God, against whom each sin is sinned. So far as this ground of moral judgment is affected by the mediæval world of personal claims or by the casual and arbitrary nature of Church penances, Anselm's vision of truth is clouded and the moral worth of his contentions is lowered. So far as it expresses that experience of communion with God which filled his own devout and saintly life, it is a thing of the highest and most permanent value —a thing profoundly Christian.

There are opposing influences discernible in Anselm's thought, which militate against the view that atonement is morally necessary. Nor are they confined to Anselm's starting-point; whether we carry his thought back to the disciplinary ideas of the Church, or to the ideas of private rights contained in Roman law and again in German custom, or to some mixture. Other more theological principles or prejudices endanger his whole argument. His dialectic is employed, one fears, not so much in solving difficulties as in raising a dust to conceal difficulties that are unreduced and, for Anselm, irreducible.

In contrast with the latent, yet powerfully operative, idea of moral necessity, Anselm

takes his stand upon an extreme conception of omnipotence, as seen not only in God but in Christ; for Christ is personally God upon the higher side of His being, though in the dialogue, Western fashion, He is constantly termed *ille homo*. In the case of God, the idea of His sultan-like, unrestricted freedom clashes with the main positions of the *Cur Deus Homo*. When expounding the moral necessity of Atonement, Anselm has frankly made this necessity positive for God. If the ends of a rational creation are to be attained, they must be attained (angels having fallen) through mankind, and—man having fallen—through man's redemption. One inclines to hold that this assertion is essentially Christian. What does it affirm but that God is love, and that He follows love's necessitation, which is very freedom, in its highest form? Unfortunately, Anselm's insistence upon divine omnipotence or unrestricted freedom leads him to pare away his main thesis. After careful study one reader, to the best of his knowledge and belief, must report evasion or self-contradiction on Anselm's part. God cannot be necessitated, not even morally. He must always be free with the freedom of caprice or of limitless power. Whether because of the Predestinarian tradition, or because of a traditional Paganism

incorporated in the theological doctrine of God, the moralizing and consequent Christianizing of Anselm's thought suffers grave loss. The final result is persistent ambiguity.

Like difficulty emerges in regard to the work of Christ. A divine Christ, pledged to God and to man by obligations which He cannot set aside, is to Anselm—as to Catholicism in general—unfree and undivine. Boso manages to raise the difficulty in a perversely ingenious form. The mother of Christ, still conceived by the majority of Catholic minds in Anselm's day as a sharer in racial sin, was purified by her faith in the foreseen death of her Son and Lord. How, then, could Christ be free to act as He might choose — to be a Saviour, or alternatively to refuse the tremendous task? Once again the argument appears to hedge and quibble. Perhaps it conceals but certainly it does not solve the difficulty that has been unearthed. Later Roman theology, raising the Immaculate Conception of Mary to the rank of a dogma, obviates the emergence of Boso's clever puzzle. And a more intelligent and more historical view of the progress of revelation will not affirm to-day the foreseen Atonement of Jesus Christ in any mind before His own; and even in it, perhaps, will detect the slow and painful discovery of the

tremendous truth. But these changes affect the form rather than the substance of Boso's puzzle. In one shape or another the puzzle will remain for all who take the wrong view of freedom, and will remain insoluble. Only the identification of freedom with moral necessity will reveal to us that Christ is not lowered but glorified by His steadfast purpose to surrender His own will in fidelity to the will of God.

Another difficulty arises, or the same difficulty recurs intensified, when we consider the Catholic doctrine of merit as a moral extra, lying above and beyond the requirements of moral law. Here we have to do not with God but with Christ, and with Christ purely as man; for Catholic theology has never undertaken the paradox of expounding God as a meritorious being. It is true that, when Anselm is dealing with what Protestant orthodoxy calls the "impetration" of human salvation by Christ, he never uses the word "merit." That term emerges[1] when he turns to speak of the "application" of salvation. But there is the same fundamental view of what makes Christ's satisfaction satisfactory and of what makes His merit meritorious. Each is a moral extra; and indeed the two are one. Hence the whole gracious life of the Saviour falls out of the

[1] Bk. II. ch. xix.

reckoning when Anselm is reckoning up the worth of Christ's prestations. He concentrates on the death.[1] The life of obedience was due to God by the Deus Homo *qua* homo. The death alone was something beyond all that could be due. Death is the penalty of sin. It is due from sinners. Personal death is not due from the spotlessly Righteous One. Hence when—we might almost say—He got Himself killed by His enemies "through persevering in righteousness," a moral value could be offered to God which was infinitely satisfactory and infinitely meritorious; for this death was the death of the *Deus* homo; innocent as man, and infinite as God. So great a deed of honour and act of service more than outweighed all the wrong that[2] sin had done to God. Concurrently this, the one possible satisfaction for human sin,[3] being itself an infinite satisfaction, disengages an infinite merit; which God rewards by imputing[4] it not to Christ—He has

[1] Dr. David Smith makes a curious slip in speaking of Anselm's emphasizing not the death but the life of Christ. Perhaps he meant to dwell on the fact that positive moral worth in Christ and not mere negative rehabilitation of mankind is recognized by Anselm.

[2] In one sense! In another sense, God can suffer no loss by the worst acts of sinners—so says Anselm.

[3] And for diabolic sins satisfaction is impossible, in view of reasons which Anselm gives and Boso accepts.

[4] Though the word is not used the thought is there.

no need! He is qualified for all glory and honour as *Deus* Homo—but to the human brethren of Christ who imitate His example. At this point, the laxity of Anselm's seemingly close logic becomes strangely manifest. We have travelled a long way from absolute moral necessitation when the meritoriousness of Christ's extra service is decreed, by God and by Christ, to balance and more than balance the bankrupt account of the [elect] human race. All these artificialities vanish if we return to the thought of moral necessitation, or—as the best modern Protestant theology expresses it —of the Vocation of Christ.

The last criticism may be restated and expanded from a slightly different point of view. The positive or, in M'Leod Campbell's phrase, "prospective" aspect of the Atonement is interpreted by Anselm as merit towards God and as example towards men. In choosing the latter expression he makes a further extraordinary revelation of the incoherence of his system. Critics, contemporary and recent, of the brilliant theologian of the next generation — Abelard — have taunted him with laying undue emphasis on the thought of Christ's example; as if *that* could possibly be all! The criticism hardly does Abelard justice. Whatever he has to say about example, he

lays much greater emphasis upon the revelation of God's love in Christ and upon its effects on human character. Incomplete though this may be, it constitutes a much deeper and more truly "ethical" theory of Atonement than any doctrine of example. (It is amazing that the profoundly Christian mind of Anselm could formulate nothing better than a reference to example when he sought to explain the bearing of Christ's Atonement on character and on motive and on the heart of man.) Even if one were able to accept Anselm's central thoughts as they stand—a thing we neither can nor ought to do—we should still have to confess that his vision was woefully incomplete.

A quantitative element is introduced or emphasized by Anselm[1] in his doctrine of satisfaction on a seemingly unchallengeable ground. If satisfactions are required for sins, it is urged that great sins need greater satisfactions and minor sins less—whether from the sinner directly or from the Saviour acting on his behalf. On the other hand, Anselm finds that the satisfaction offered by the God-man is infinite. Perhaps this affirmation really implies the cancelling of the quantitative conception. Between infinity and a finite quantity, small or great, the gulf is absolute. If we allow

[1] i. 21.

ourselves, under the guidance of such a thinker as M'Leod Campbell, to conceive a moral and spiritual atonement, quantitative values disappear. The whole Catholic apparatus vanishes—admittedly great sins, definitely small sins, individual separate liabilities, quantitative sums of guilt, book-keeping that shows a balance for or against one. But, once again, if this is the implicit meaning of what he says, Anselm has not grasped it. He does not intend to move away from the general Catholic assumptions.

In comparison both with previous and with later ages,[1] Anselm stands alone in viewing atonement as due to the personal honour of God. He has no intention of antagonizing this claim to that of abstract righteousness; but the danger is always present, and it shows itself clearly when Anselm contrasts the scale of God's greatness with that of the finite universe,[2] and when he condemns a hypothetical sin which saved the whole universe but infringed, however slightly, the Divine dignity. This imaginary illustration is an inversion of all facts. It is not really sin that saves uni-

[1] There is a possible exception in the case of theories which explain Atonement in terms of personal relationship; comp. Chap. XV.

[2] i. 21.

verses from perishing! Righteousness and the fear of God might do that. God has joined two things together, His glory and our good. Let not theology put them asunder! There are questions which admit of no rational answer. This is one—Of two inseparables, which to choose? Suppose $2 + 2 = 5$, how will you reconstitute the science of arithmetic? It cannot be done. The science lies in ruins. Suppose loyalty to God destroys the universe and disloyalty spares it, how ought we to act? Anselm, in his devotion to the Sultan of heaven, dares to answer a question which is intrinsically meaningless or worse. Are we required to deal with that question? We are bound to answer that the science of theology lies in ruins. More, and worse still, the faith of a Christian heart lies in ruins.

Every one who says, with any glimmering of real faith, "I believe in God"—assuredly every one who says, "I believe in God the Father of Jesus Christ"—is pledged never to put, never to answer, questions of such blasphemous folly. *Our Father*—what father is that whose glory can, even in imagination, be erected on the destruction of all his children? The theology of Atonement has habitually thought of God's claim as hostile to man. It is never to be denied, or kept out of sight, that God in His

eternal righteousness is hostile to deliberate sin. But also, God is our truest friend. And—explain it as we may—there is no schism or self-contradiction in God. We take refuge with Him because He is righteous; if He were not righteous, what refuge could He afford us? We take refuge with Him too because He is loving, gracious, fatherly—not in spite of His righteousness, but as the full blazing glory of which the first partial yet sacred revelation is made when His righteousness is revealed—a righteousness which cannot and will not look upon sin. In that glory of Divine love, the righteousness, the justice, the very wrath of God is present. It is not abolished, though it is transcended.)

It follows from what has been said that there can be no net sacrifice on the part of a child of God. There are those who taunt Christianity for this reason with moral inferiority as compared with atheism; and we must allow them the pleasure of making a successful debating score. In God's reasonable universe it can never permanently be the better for any man to do wrong; nor can it ever fail to be the better for every man and for every great interest to do right. In our shortsightedness, with our exposure to pain and sorrow, there will be trial enough for the virtue of the proud-

est heart independently of the morally preposterous trial of accepting net loss in the service of the good. Time after time, it will look to us as if we were offering idle sacrifices to cruel abstractions. Yet in our heart of heart we shall know better. So "God shall repay," and "we are safer so."

Are we, then, in error if we emphasize the personal claim of God? It might be possible to state a whole theology in terms of abstract righteousness, and by so doing we might escape some of those errors which gravely mar the achievement of Anselm.

It might be possible; but how unnatural it would be! To let the glory of God count for *nothing* in our interpretation of the work and suffering of Christ would not be according to the mind that was in Him. If we add no new formal element to our analysis of the contents of righteousness by interpreting it in terms of Divine honour and glory, we make its appeal incomparably more telling. For, if God is indeed our Father, the childlike and repentant heart cannot possibly be indifferent to the insults which sin has heaped upon perfect holiness and perfect love.

As we give thanks to Christ our Lord for all things, so especially we will thank and praise Him for glorifying the name of God upon

earth. Where God had been distrusted, we see in Christ trust to the uttermost. Where God had been disliked and ignored, we see in Christ God loved and adored by a human heart. Where God's appointments had been criticized, misjudged, reviled, met with murmuring, with mockery, we see in Christ God's will honoured to the uttermost. Nothing is withheld; the sacrifice is complete. Best of all, the mind that was in Christ is not barren. This temper of the true "Servant of the Lord" is not an antiquarian curiosity, which left the world nearly two thousand years ago. It passes age after age into others—victoriously, redeemingly. It may pass into us and get the mastery, "according to the power whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself"; yes, and to His Father.

If God is indeed our Father in heaven, is not the owning of that claim salvation's self—for the soul, and for the universe? Such salvation is Christ's gift.

However little Anselm has stated all this in terms which the Christian conscience can accept, he has borne a witness to one aspect of the thought of Christ's Atonement which we could obliterate only at our peril and with immeasurable impoverishment of our faith and life.

CHAPTER VIII

Abelard and Moral Influence Theories

Abelard claims a place in our review because of his singularly powerful and impressive statement of a moral or subjective theory. It is quite possible that, under the influence of Ritschl, an excessive tendency has arisen towards making Abelard's views the exclusive alternative to Anselm's. Even if we treated the theories of the two great mediæval divines as complementary, it might be wrong to confine ourselves to these special presentations of the Christian doctrine. There may be other valuable contributions, notably those *quasi*-mystical forms of thought which Ritschl was so prone to hustle on one side, condemned without examination. We must not, then, overrate Abelard; and yet we cannot neglect him.

There is another respect in which Abelard's views may seem to be of less consequence than recent treatment makes them. He interprets atonement as a demonstration of love in the death of Christ; but this thought is familiar as

part of the classical statement of "objective" doctrine—in St. Paul; in Augustine; in Anselm himself. It is possible to argue that Abelard's characteristic doctrine is a mere fragment of a larger whole. In Anselm's Dialogue we find the doctrine anticipated. It is stated; and then it is waived aside as a position which, put forward by itself, lacks solidity. Yet, at the least, the position receives greater emphasis when it is treated as central.

Again, as we have noted, Anselm's exclusive emphasis upon Christ's example—when he raises the question, how Christ's benefits directly affect the souls of His people—compares very unfavourably with the teaching of the younger and less orthodox divine. Although Anselm was well aware of the manifestation of love in Christ—although spiritually he responded to it with every fibre of his devout heart—his ingenious and artificial construction of the "philosophy of the plan of salvation" (to borrow a phrase from late Protestant orthodoxy) puts the higher thought out of his mind, and leaves the more superficial rationalistic view in possession of the field. The opposite emphasis makes Abelard memorable.

The text of Scripture which seems to have weighed most with Abelard is his favourite

citation, John xv. 13. The great utterance of Luke vii. 47 is distorted for him, as for Roman Catholic theology in general, from being a statement of the consequences of receiving Divine grace into passing for a statement of the conditions upon which the grace of forgiveness is imparted. Similarly, in spite of verse 8,[1] the great Pauline utterance in Rom. v. is largely sterilized. The love "shed abroad" in the believing heart is taken by the Catholic tradition as our poor secondary and dependent love towards God, and not as God's great primary and fontal love towards us.

Yet let us not exaggerate. Principal Franks holds that we can trace in Abelard a definite attempt to concentrate and simplify religious thought, with the promise of a powerful influence on the religious life. Now, in a devout mind, such simplification tells upon the secondary love as well as the primary. Protestants are not without good reasons for calling Roman Catholic theology legalist; but the deeper mediæval piety throws aside its arithmetic of merits and demerits, forgets for the moment its schemes of satisfaction, and loses itself in a loving vision of Divine love.

On the other hand, Principal Franks draws our attention to the fact that Abelard is one of

[1] In spite also of Gal. ii. 20.

the prophets of an intensified sacramental emphasis. Perhaps in his religious life and in the central utterances of his theology he saw deeper; but, as a trained and expert thinker, he corrects the trichotomy of Augustine's *Enchiridion*—faith, hope, and love—into faith, love, and *the sacraments*; hope ranking as a sub-species of faith. In both regards Peter Lombard may be considered the heir of Abelard. He reproduces (among other forms of doctrine) Abelard's central view of Atonement, while he as yet makes no place for the Anselmic conception of satisfaction. And he works out the scheme of seven sacraments which will henceforth be classical and dominant in the Catholic theology of the West, and which will ultimately be adopted by the Orthodox Church of the East.

Now, in this second piece of more scientific insight, Abelard goes far towards cancelling his programme of concentration and simplification. If the Christian salvation is essentially and inherently sacramental, it is a blank at the heart for our reason and for our moral experience. The first and decisive gift of Divine forgiveness meant as good as nothing for the Atonement-theology of the East, because the gift was conceived as sacramental, *i.e.* as baptismal. And, baptism being administered

to infants, the primary exercise of Divine mercy became an unintelligible mystery. The new "sacrament" of penance, which moulds the doctrine of Atonement in the West, is not liable to the whole of this censure. In spite of many faults, it presents us with a complex of moral beliefs and experiences. Contrition, confession, satisfaction, whatever their value as keys to unlock the workings of God's grace, are at least moral, though they tend towards a conventional not to say a degraded moral type. When Abelard points the theological mind away from these categories, partly indeed to the display of God's love, but partly also to sacrament *qua* sacrament, he is again preparing the ecclesiastical mind to place an x—an unknown and even, alas, an unknowable quantity—at the heart of the faith.

The characteristic result of this whole development is the childish and materialistic dogma of Transubstantiation. The true counterpart of the x of Infant Baptism is found not in the questionably legitimate sacrament of penance — conscience speaks there, even if, perhaps, only as a dreamer talks in his sleep—but in the New Testament sacrament of the Lord's Supper when Catholicism has turned it into a piece of magic. If the physical blood and physical flesh of the Lord Jesus were ever

so truly reconstituted in the Mass, what could they bring to the God of heaven, or to the sinful souls for whom Christ died? The thing is incredible in itself and incomprehensible in its working; yet, when the human soul cries in its hunger for the bread of life, the Church offers it this stone. With and under this travesty of the Gospel the true evangelical forces may—thank God!—continue their healing work for many a saint. But they will do so better and more safely when the travesty has been exposed and transferred to those museums in which we study the fossils of an ancient world.

To this effect Abelard may have contributed; we feel certain that it was no part of his purpose. His conscious and deliberate effort in relation to the doctrine of Atonement is to strike the great chord—so God, so Christ has loved us, so must we necessarily love in return. Yet of Abelard as well as of Anselm it is noted that, when he does not theorize of set purpose, he falls back largely into traditional forms of expression.[1] This may mean less than in

[1] The supposition (Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, p. 373) that he ever uses the language of ransom from the devil seems, however, a blunder. Abelard quotes a passage from Origen into which that doctrine enters, without taking the trouble to register his dissent. It does not seem made out even by Principal Grensted's quotation (*Short History of Doctrine of Atonement*, p. 109) that he ever really wavered in his rejection of that mythological fancy.

Anselm, who supplements the rather wire-drawn ingenuities and artificialities of his dialectic with franker and more unstudied utterances of the heart. In Abelard's case, it may simply be that habit and tradition are at work. Or are we to suppose that Abelard's extraordinarily acute mind was—even if sub-consciously—uneasy as to the complete adequacy of a doctrine of the display of love in the cross? The traditional forms of speech may in him be an unconfessed stop-gap or makeshift, bearing witness to a real *necessity* for Christ's suffering and dying. Great love being displayed in meeting such necessity—perhaps in meeting the necessity of *punishment*—emphasis may pass at once from the mysterious underlying necessity to the constraining and saving power of Christ's devotion. This, one holds, would be no fully satisfactory type of doctrine. And one is sure that Abelard would not have thought it satisfactory. Yet, with all its imperfections, the doctrine of a *legal* or *quasi*-legal necessity met, and in the meeting setting forth a great display of love, must be better than a doctrine with an unmended leak at the valve.

We are on less conjectural lines when we ask another question. What is the necessity contemplated in Abelard's more central thought of atonement? He has a plain answer for us.

Here, the necessity is found by him in the sluggishness and coldness of man's heart. Nothing less than such heart-piercing and heart-breaking self-sacrifice could have regenerated the fallen race; and this great deed of love necessarily—as we have ventured to express it, on earlier pages—articulates forwards and cannot fail to awaken and to rescue not perhaps all souls but at least a multitude whom no man can number, out of every people and every time; the multitude, as Abelard and all his age would add, of the *Elect.*

This may be a suitable point for dwelling upon a curious assertion found in Duns Scotus among others, to the effect that the non-necessity of Christ's sufferings lends them their supreme power over us. We have ventured to follow St. Paul and those he has inspired in asserting the opposite view. Necessary sacrifices are telling; needless sacrifices are idle. Mediæval ingenuity would appear to challenge that strongly held position. An easier way might have served—so it is suggested—but our Lord chose the hard way; was it not generous? Shall not His choice move us to the soul? This suggests a modification of our parable.[1] We were drowning. Our rescuer might have thrown us a rope. That was not enough for

[1] See Chap. I.

him! He plunged in Himself, and in such memorable fashion saved us. To say that Christ's Atonement by death was not the only possible means of human salvation but yet was the *best* means, more efficacious and more glorious than any other—that in itself,[1] I take it, does not deny but reasserts Atonement. We have already argued that "it behoved Him" and "it was needful" are, both of them, legitimate, Biblical, Christian utterances of the faith by which we live. But when they are deliberately contrasted, we cannot view both as equally worthy of God. And that is just to say that, in the end, moral necessity is a higher and truer interpretation of God's ways than moral expediency can ever be.

The question then remains, whether the subjective and psychological necessity of a great display of love, in order to win us and rescue us from sin, is basis enough for our Christian faith in the atoning work of Christ. And the further question, whether the forward-articulating necessity which assumes that Christ will ransom "many" is clearly established. We are quite sure that the dying love of Jesus has

[1] In itself; but as it appears, *e.g.*, in Duns it seems part of the process of general thaw during which the solidest Christian beliefs melt away before our eyes.

I cannot for the life of me understand how Principal Franks should praise Duns's theology of Atonement.

that power and cannot fail. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." But if it were *only* a display of love—if it were not strictly and absolutely necessary—would it have that power? One inclines to hold that what was not truly necessary in view of the past could have no such sure promise for the future, and that what did not hold strict and absolute values for the Most High God could not contain them for men.

CHAPTER IX

Historic Protestantism and the Penal Scheme

A second great effort at establishing true moral necessity for Atonement was the penal doctrine. It began pretty early, and gained considerable strength during the later Middle Ages, but it culminated at the Reformation. Satisfaction came to be sharply defined as satisfaction to justice, and mainly—though not exclusively—to penal justice. All Catholic theology has a taint of contingency. Authority, not reason or conscience, is the supreme thing for it. Even when its thoughts of atonement are guided by elements from its own sacrament of penance which suggest punishment, it inclines to something of the nature of *quasi*-punishment in dealing with Christ as in dealing with us. Everything is conventional, arbitrary, wavering.

It is an immense change from this—a marked change too from Anselm's premises—when, as Ritschl expresses it, Protestant thought conceives of God as the administrator of a

great system of public criminal law. We must not be misled by Professor David Smith, who seeks to trace the influence of the arbitrary State Governments of the time in the Protestant scheme of doctrine. Apart from cross-currents due to belief in Predestination, the God of Protestant theology is no tyrant. Rather He is a constitutional sovereign. One might almost call Him a limited monarch. At every point He has to reckon with the requirements of His own law. The classical Protestant scheme of Atonement tells us how God bought off the claims of law, and secured freedom for the impulses of His grace.

One is bound to add that, in one's own judgment, the penal scheme decisively broke down. If a thought was made central which had flickered through the minds of Christian men during long ages, the result of focussing it at the centre of vision was to exhibit it not as true but as incredible. Whatever analogy there may be, closer or looser, between the sufferings of Christ and the punishment of a criminal or sinner, identity there is none; and no ingenuity, however equipped with the manifold resources of sophistry, can make a penal substitution appear morally normal. As time goes on, the presence of unworthy elements in this proudly self-confident theology

becomes plainer and plainer. One may doubt the sufficiency of the late Professor Stevens' own positive construction, as hinted in his *Christian Doctrine of Salvation*; but his cross-examination of the penal theory is masterly and triumphant. If the Reformers began by enumerating the constitutional obstacles which the love of God had to clear out of its path in order to accomplish its free purpose of mercy, the logic of the structure is not satisfied until we reach the frank formulation quoted from the earlier work of Dr. A. H. Strong.[1] Justice, or retributive righteousness, is "a principle of God's nature, not only independent of love, but superior to love."

We are sometimes told that logic rules the world. Happily that is not true. God has never abdicated, and His children are not left to work out unhelped the consequences of half-true premises. He knows far better than we ourselves not only what we say but what it is we are trying to utter. At the same time, theological and religious error is no small mischief; and it is not possible permanently for the most pious of hearts to set logic at defiance. There are impressive, there are most moving displays of a Christian piety which uses the dialect of the penal theory. And that

[1] By Stevens, *ut supra*, p. 178.

piety is unquestionably aiming at a truth; not merely the truth of the necessity of Christ to human salvation, but at the least the further truth of the necessity of Christ's sufferings. And yet, in logic, this is what it comes to; that God is essentially just—according to the principles of penal law—and accidentally or contingently loving, gracious, redemptive. Catholicism had hinted at this; the older Protestantism embarked upon definitions which could have no other outcome than the naked assertion itself. Not upon such lines can the moral necessity of atonement be truly vindicated.

But we must return to the beginnings of Protestantism, noting the assertions which are distinctive of its beliefs regarding Atonement in their contrast with mediævalism.

I

First of all, we might expect to find in Protestantism a clear affirmation of the necessity of Christ's sufferings as the only means of human salvation. Strangely enough, this affirmation lingers. All the four chief Reformers as quoted by Principal Franks—Luther, Zwingli, Melancthon, Calvin—make reserves, and in the end decline the assertion. They

are not content with the formula of a later orthodoxy—that God "might justly have left us" all in our sins, and that no positive necessity arising either from righteousness or from mercy required God to save men. Contingency is affirmed, not merely in regard to the choice—to redeem, or not to redeem—but also in regard to the method of redemption. It may seem audacious to charge the Reformers with not having clearly understood the purport of their own thought; and yet, upon full consideration, the verdict seems inevitable. It was not the great men who came first, but the lesser men[1] who followed, that spoke out on this matter the inner thought of Protestantism.

More precisely, the adhesion of the great Reformers to the traditional thesis of Augustine, which denies the absolute necessity of Christ's sufferings, may be explained by the following considerations. *First*, the immense and deserved influence of Augustine. *Secondly*, the natural working of Christian reverence. One may think such reverence misapplied. One may hold that the fact of Christ's death, which assuredly was not "gratuitous," makes it truer reverence in us to proclaim rather than to dispute absolute moral necessitation. One may also concede that the difference, between affirm-

[1] Mr. Mozley names John Gerhard the Lutheran scholastic.

ing such necessitation and affirming a high degree of moral fitness, is less important for Christian preaching or prayer than for the schools of theology. Also the motive of reverence is eminently honourable, even if it be not always wise. There is something pleasing to us when great Christian minds, almost reckless at times in their dogmatism, decline to affirm that God "must" do this or that. Would that all errors had as much of redeeming quality in them!

But, *thirdly*, we must also reckon with the workings of Predestinarian belief, whose effects, one must affirm, are almost wholly bad. Almost —for it is better that your faith and hope should fasten upon the strong, unwavering, victorious purpose of God than upon the fluctuating movements of the human will. "The counsel of the Lord, it standeth for ever; the thoughts of His heart unto all generations." But, if we frame the evil dogmas, that some are saved and some lost, and that the difference is due to God's own choice; that the saved are saved because God willed their salvation, while the lost perish because He preferred their perdition; that the difference between one and another is due to God's arbitrary preference, or else to some hidden motive; so that even the Christian, if Predestinationism is true, worships an unknown

and probably an unknowable God, not a God of love: then, alas,

> The pillared firmament is rottenness
> And earth's base built on stubble.

There is perhaps no result more unexpected from the study of the Christian doctrine of Atonement, but certainly none is better assured, than that Predestinationism—*God's unmotived or secret will, used as the master-key*—always works for the disintegration both of theology and of faith. From Augustine downwards, if not even from St. Paul, belief in election was the vehicle of evangelical religion. Entire dependence on God in Christ was supposed to involve literally a potter Deity who deals with the sentient human clay just as He wills. This intended vehicle of evangelical piety proved again and again destructive of evangelicalism. We must break with the agelong error, not only in zeal for the rights of man, but also for the glory of God. It is time that Christian theology should cease to dabble in blasphemy. If one may judge from Dr. Denney's last legacy, the tyranny is practically overpast even in what has hitherto been a distinctively Calvinistic Church. Is it too much to hope that Presbyterian Churches will put themselves right with the Christian and also the non-Christian world by practising a little more frankness?

II

A second conspicious novelty is the tremendous assertion that Christ upon the cross suffered the very pains of hell. This is not indeed exclusively Protestant teaching. To say nothing of the extravagances of modern Roman Catholic preaching, Mr. Mozley quotes from a sixteenth-century Spanish cardinal what is hardly to be distinguished from this evil piece of audacity. Dr. Denney, who refers us to "a list of passages in Köstlin's *Life*," reminds us that Luther began the tradition within Protestantism. On this point, so far as my information goes, Zwingli and Melancthon are silent. The cautious Calvin, however, is found supporting the opinion, which he offers as the interpretation of the phrase in the creed, "He descended into hell." That is a piece of rather violent exegesis. Calvin does not suffer undeservedly if Bellarmine the Roman Catholic and John Gerhard the Lutheran impute to him the belief that, between Christ's death and His resurrection, He "went to hell"[1] in the modern sense of the

[1] Comp. Mozley. This appears to have been the theology of Sir Lewis Morris. In some verses describing a mother who became a street-walker to earn bread for her children, Morris breaks out:

> Motherly love sunk to this! Ah, well
> Teach they how He passed into hell.

"They" who "teach" that are no Christians of any recognized Church or creed.

word, *i.e.* inhabited the place of punishment. The same John Gerhard and his fellow-Lutheran Quenstedt repeat the doctrine that Christ suffered the pains of hell.[1] Among Calvinists, the English Puritan Owen is notable as laying down the same thesis; Dr. Denney reasonably remarks upon the extraordinary logical coldness with which he handles it.

And yet, if we are to believe that Christ was literally a substitute bearing the punishment which we had incurred, what less can we affirm? *Quasi*-punishment may be anything or nothing; the real punishment of real moral guilt is *hell*—whatever hell may prove to be for those who make the awful experience.[2] There is no evading this conclusion. Christ did not die for those who had incurred little guilt and small liability to punishment. He died for the worst. He died for all. If punishment was transferred, the worst punishment of all must have been laid on Him—hell, in all or more than all of its intensity, if not in its alleged endless duration.

[1] I have conjectured that Ps. cxvi. 3 must have been distorted in this sense. *Albrecht Ritschl and his School*, p. 83 n.

[2] Corporal punishment in hell will rarely be affirmed to-day, though I believe I have heard a distinguished Scottish theological professor name it from the pulpit as "part" of the ultimate doom.

Those who make little of the possibilities of physical pain can have had little experience of it. But those who make little of mental pain—ah! what do they know of "the power which an infinite Being has over us, to make us miserable"?

This is indeed a *reductio ad blasphemiam.* To state such a thesis is to refute it. But, if we seriously mean that Christ as a substitute endured the punishment which His brethren had incurred, had they not incurred this?

III

There are not a few who will dismiss this whole doctrine because they have ceased to believe in retributive punishment anywhere, under any conditions. The present writer desires once again to dissociate himself from that way of escape. He would once again quote the immortal, the boundlessly significant confession, "We indeed suffer justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds." To be unable to join in that confession, when one's sin has found one out, is a measureless spiritual loss. To influence others against "accepting the punishment of their iniquity" is to vex God's good Spirit. Not punishment as such, but transferred punishment, is morally anomalous and incredible. Hence we must break with the penal doctrine of Atonement. At that one decisive point it goes bankrupt. We believe that it is worthy of God to punish. Rather would it be unworthy of Him to exhibit indifference towards sin. But, according to the

plain verdict of the undrugged conscience, transferred punishment *is unjust.)* And, if a scheme of doctrine breaks down at a single point which is vital to it, how great and how significant is that collapse!

There is a further reason which seems to make this single difficulty fatal to the entire theory. Protestantism, we believe, is in search of a scheme of thought which shall exhibit the Atonement of Jesus Christ as morally necessary. Christian thought and life are to be rescued from those forces of arbitrariness and contingency which had nearly destroyed the faith. Apparently, the penal theory takes strong ground in support of moral necessity. Sin must be punished, and therefore Christ our substitute must die. Granted the premises, considerable weight attaches to these thoughts. But what about the crucial affirmation itself? Can penal substitution—granted it were possible—be termed morally necessary? Do not contingency and arbitrariness show themselves at this point with fatal power? This is the Achilles' heel of the doctrine. The evil thing may have been driven into one small corner; but there it is! And it is the very pivot on which the whole construction turns. The penal theory, sporadic in Catholicism, central in early Protestantism, has been associated over and

over again with deep Christian piety. Symbolically, it must correspond to great truths. But it comes forward not as symbol but as fact, as gnosis, as "philosophy of the plan of salvation." And therefore, with all its good intentions and ambitious claims—therefore it fails.

IV

When established under early Protestantism, the penal doctrine as such was confessed to be inadequate. The completed scheme was not in every part penal; but in a true sense every part was legal.[1] Two extensions were introduced. They made the doctrine perhaps less inadequate, but certainly more clumsy and artificial.

(*a*) It was taught with quite new definiteness that the law of God was "satisfied" not merely by the transferred punishment of the cross, passively endured, but also by the transferred "active" obedience of the life of the Saviour. So unwarrantable is it to say, with Foley, that Protestantism took a purely passive view of Christ's work. Possibly there may be ground for the assertion sometimes made, that the *death* of Christ is with Roman Catholic theology

[1] Even "merit" of which Protestantism speaks has its significance in contrast with bare legality.

more of the active presentation of a sacrifice—with classical Protestantism, rather the passive endurance of punishment. But, in the view taken of the whole earthly *life* of Christ, it is Protestantism which emphasizes the redemptive value of Christ's active righteousness. And we cannot but recognize in this a begininng of insight into the moral meaning of the greatest thing in history, the "fact of Christ." Only, unhappily, the classical Protestant theology takes the life of obedience as well as the death of suffering as a debt due to law.

It is not our meaning that the life and the death are sharply contrasted by the Protestant divines. They are fully aware that activity and passivity are aspects of one grand achievement on behalf of God and righteousness—not things separate in time, or different kinds of experience in the history of the Christ. But law is dominant. Wherever there is suffering in Christ, we are to count it legal penalty. And wherever there is an obedient will, we are to regard it as satisfaction to the commands which law addresses to those whom Christ saves. His righteousness is a legal achievement, "imputed" to us. Now Law—if we will accept the guidance of St. Paul—is not an adequate measure of the relations between God and men. And, if it were, one cannot shake

off the impression that there would be something pettifogging in the justice of Heaven if it required both the substitutionary punishment of the fault committed and the substitutionary performance of the duty that had remained unperformed. God is likened in such theology to an unscrupulous attorney, who puts down every possible claim, even if claims overlap, in the hope that something may be gained for a client's profit if not for his honour. Correspondingly, the "imputation of the active obedience" was one of the first parts of the complex Protestant structure to give way, notably—though not first of all—in Arminianism, evangelical as well as rationalistic.

Scripture tells us that Christ died for our sins. That affirmation is the heart of the matter. That He also obeyed in our room and stead is at best a theological refinement. No doubt it is true that God—even, if one like to put it so, that the justice of God—cannot be satisfied with the most tremendous of penalties, even with a penalty endured by the righteous and holy One. But this truth summons us to break entirely with legalism. It does not authorize us to patch or eke out the theology of substitutionary penalty with a still more anomalous doctrine of substitutionary obedience.

(*b*) The second supplement is the doctrine

of Christ's merit. In this, obviously, another Catholic and mediæval category is taken over by the new firm of Protestant divinity, side by side with the equally Catholic doctrine of satisfaction which for Protestantism has become twofold. There is new wine, but the wine is again to be poured into old bottles. Merit is a radically Catholic idea—Catholic in a sense which makes it radically un-Protestant and in the last resort un-Christian. It stands for something beyond the performance of strict duty. Of course Catholic theology exhibits its usual laxity when it speaks of merit. Continually we find it dealing in paper money—in *quasi*-merit. Sinners may attain to merit *de congruo*; saints may have their dutiful no less than their supererogatory actions accepted, as if all were positively meritorious.[1] Protestantism would rather teach that the flawless fidelity of the God-man, in act and in suffering, is a thing of such beauty and purity as not merely to meet every requirement of righteousness but to run out beyond law, promising infinite blessedness to the humblest, weakest, and (in the past) guiltiest of Christ's clients. That thought is true indeed, commending itself to every Christian conscience; but it must find a happier expression.

[1] One conjectures this to be the Catholic train of thought.

The maturer theology of the Protestant Church has no use either for the conception of a goodness which is more than good, or for an estimation put by God upon the achievement even of the Only-begotten which works with arbitrary standards. The thought of merit, even as confined to Christ, darkens and disturbs the moral intuitions of Christianity. We had thought that the love of God would find its way to us unerringly if the barrier created by sin were once removed. Now we are told a different tale. The barrier is gone; satisfaction for sin is presented and is accepted; yet the love of God flows forth only in recognition of merit in Christ—of a claim on the part of the Saviour—of a claim that is *quasi*-legal, or more-than-legal, and yet is of the same general type with legal things. Such a conception as that is unworthy to be brought into contact with Christ.

It may be said in praise of historic Protestantism that it furnishes a completer and closer-knit doctrine of Atonement than Catholicism ever achieved. "Satisfaction" and "merit" are no longer hesitatingly identified or imperfectly discriminated. Each has its own meaning. Satisfaction is negative, or — in M'Leod Campbell's terminology—"retrospective." It deals directly with law—sometimes

with the law that commands, sometimes with the law that punishes. "Merit" is positive or "prospective." Dr. Denney thinks it probable that American Protestant theology went furthest in the elaboration of the doctrine. It may have gone far; but there seems no reason for dethroning the Lutheran Formula of Concord from its supreme place as a great official embodiment of this most scholastic doctrine of Protestantism. In any case, Protestant scholasticism may claim to have beaten mediæval scholasticism at its own game. In Ritschl's formulation, when "co-ordinated" active and passive obedience mean Satisfaction; but, when passive is "subordinated" to active obedience, they mean Merit—positive moral claim and promise before God. Praise, then, is due to the Protestant schoolmen, but we must not carry our praise too far. A better expression than either satisfaction or merit is found in the assertion of Christ's faithfulness in His vocation, as put forward by Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Hofmann, and others. Such language is worthier of Protestantism and worthier of Christianity.

For our purpose, the chief lesson from these refinements of formulated post-Reformation orthodoxy may be very briefly stated. On the admission of its own champions, the penal

doctrine of Atonement in itself is incomplete. And the refinements needed to round it off were so artificial that they began to fall to pieces when the structure was hardly so much as finished. This is not our only reason for rejecting the traditional Protestant theology of Atonement; but one may boldly claim that it is a good reason and a sound. And it confirms the teaching of those more fundamental criticisms already indicated.

Independently of the penal doctrine as such, Protestantism has the credit of a new doctrinal formulation in the scheme of the Three Offices—Prophet, Priest, King. This resembles the penal doctrine in being the deliberate working out of a well-known casual suggestion of earlier minds.[1] The learned tell us that Calvin had the merit of incorporating it in the theological system. Lutherans had distinguished between Christ as king and Christ as priest. Calvin prefixed Christ as prophet; and the new scheme was widely taken up. Even Lutherans accepted it. It became common Protestant form, in the days when doctrinal tradition still held its ground, before the devastations of the Age of Enlightenment and the subsequent modern epoch of miscellaneous masterless reconstruction. The Roman

[1] First of all, it is believed, of Eusebius of Cæsarea.

Catholics alone look askance at it. It has never been sanctioned by their dogmatic authorities. Perhaps, in the most genial mood possible to them, Catholic divines greet it with a smile of half-pleased amusement, as a father may watch the efforts of his child towards playing what it conceives to be the part of a man.

Principal Franks is inclined to welcome the scheme as a notable spiritual unification of theology. Is that estimate quite reliable? In words, we have unification; Christ the Anointed is one Christ, when we call Him king or priest or prophet. If we were entitled to infer that the heart of Protestant theology is the religious evaluation of Christ personally as Saviour of men, then the achievement implied by the doctrine of the Three Offices would be a very great one. But would not this summary have startled and staggered Calvin? Would it not have been summarily rejected by the Epigoni who marched under the same banner?

There is indeed something noteworthy in the prefixing of Christ as prophet to the accepted central doctrine of Christ as priest. It is almost an acclimatizing of the "Moral Theory of Atonement" as a partial and preliminary—incomplete, yet so far as it goes true—form of the doctrine. But, while it almost reaches that

high degree of significance, one cannot say that it quite does so; still less, that it does so with deliberate consciousness. It is Christ the Teacher—whether teaching on earth, or inspiring and illuminating the Scriptures from His throne in glory—whom Calvin and the later Protestants regard as prophet. That the whole of Christ's prophetic teaching is summed up in the revelation of the Cross, when spotless purity is partnered by boundless love—this they have not taught. And correspondingly they have not told us that, whatever Christ is towards God or God's moral universe, He is emphatically the light and liberator of our own consciences.

Still further: it was left for two highly distinguished if highly dissimilar Christian teachers — M'Leod Campbell and Albrecht Ritschl[1]—to pass, as it were, an electric spark through the traditional threefold scheme, and make it twofold but organically related—Christ representing God to man, Christ representing man before God. Campbell adds to this, with even deeper emphasis and solemnity, a further distinction—between what is retrospective and what is prospective in the work of Christ. Ritschl not merely omits anything correspond-

[1] Ritschl is consciously perfecting the scheme of the Three Offices. Campbell by implication does the same work.

ing to Campbell's second distinction—he would reject it if presented[1] to him; he has no room for anything remedial in the work of Christ. Satisfaction is to be superseded by merit as the negative by the positive, and merit is to be improved into Vocation. It will fall to us to record in a later chapter how differently Campbell stands related to the thought of salvation through Christ's sufferings.

Meantime, though believing that the scheme of the Three Offices *becomes* of real doctrinal significance as remodelled by the two great teachers named, we have to ask whether their formulation—or at any rate whether Ritschl's formulation—covers the whole ground. If in any sense there is room and need for a "mystical" doctrine of the Christian salvation, it is important to bear in mind that Ritschl's pigeon-holes were designed and allotted with the express purpose of excluding that doctrine. In Campbell, the mystical element of identification with Christ is ubiquitous. Never was there a stranger misunderstanding by a scholar of eminence, than when Dr. Adams Brown[2] defined the nexus, according to Campbell, between repentance in Christ and repentance

[1] We have no reason to suppose that Ritschl was acquainted with Campbell's book.

[2] *ERE*, "Expiation and Atonement (Christian)."

in us as—imitation, by virtue of moral influence! Had Campbell's dialectic, elsewhere so brilliant, kept pace here also with his profound moral and spiritual intuitions, he would have rendered such a distortion of his meaning not merely blameworthy but impossible.

CHAPTER X

Grotianism and its Echoes

Between the modern mind and the classical theologies—patristic, mediæval, or Protestant—a great gulf is interposed by the "Enlightenment" of the eighteenth century. Grotius belongs to the further side of that gulf. He has the distinction of having contributed one more theory to the old world's view of the Christian Atonement. It is true that a fresh attempt to explain the mystery was not in the least what Grotius desired to produce. His purpose was to defend the Catholic[1] faith in Christ's "satisfaction" against the attacks of Socinus. But his train of thought is essentially transitional. He says something quite different from what he believes he is saying. In the end he substitutes—unconsciously—the deterrent for the retributive conception of punishment. The Enlightenment improves on his example by substituting for both the reformatory

[1] "Catholic" in the sense of being generally or universally Christian.

theory of punishment; this it does with full consciousness. And, as the assumption remains that the Atonement is a vicarious endurance of punishment, Grotius defends the Atonement in words while undermining it in thought, but the Enlightenment flatly denies it.

On the nearer side of the devastating flood of rationalistic Enlightenment, we see much laborious piecing together of old views, notably of the penal doctrine. But we also see earnest efforts by the Christian mind to formulate the great truth freshly in more credible and worthier terms. Kant revives the stern moral temper exhibited by Anselm and by the Protestant theology. His own theology contains little or nothing to arrest us; but in philosophy he has laid deep foundations upon which more thoroughly Christian minds have striven to raise new structures. Schleiermacher again states in the grand manner a mystical doctrine of the redemption of character by the influence of the personality of Jesus. Unhappily, however, the sufferings and death of Jesus seem to yield him nothing. He does not so much explain their significance as explain them away. Thus the student of Atonement gains hardly anything from Schleiermacher.

It is not necessary to do more than remind the reader in a word of Grotius' eminence in

jurisprudence, and of his pioneer work in the statement of a coolly rational Christian apologetic. We feel it interesting to meet a layman in these regions. Apologetics and still more dogmatics had hitherto been strictly theological preserves. Yet perhaps this layman, for all his genius, fails to lead theology into the fresh air. Rather he substitutes the pedantry of a lawyer for the pedantry of divines. His manner in debate is stilted and academic, and he quotes usages of law from many different lands and ages, as if all were revelations from God Himself and binding precedents for faith.

Independently of whatever impulse Grotius imparted to the rising forces of the Enlightenment, he established a school which lasted until yesterday, and perhaps lingers still in corners to-day. While he speaks in round terms of Christ's enduring "punishment," his own characteristic views are summed up—by himself—in the affirmation of "rectoral justice" in God, and of "penal example" in Christ. He feels the difficulty of defending vicarious punishment; but, as a lawyer, he affirms—and takes our breath away by affirming—that, though punishment is necessary, it need not alight upon the particular persons who are guilty. Other theologians have laboured to show that the transference of punishment is thinkable under

the unique conditions of the transaction—in the judgment of orthodoxy it *is* unquestionably a transaction—by which Christ redeems us. It was left for a lawyer to tell us that there is no presumption of injustice in punishing the wrong man. Perhaps this does something to explain the curious finding of Dale, that the real drift of Protestant orthodoxy is best revealed in the "degraded form" which the theory assumes in Grotius. Several high authorities have expressed their dissent from Dale's estimate; and it certainly appears to be unsound, though it may be revealing. It shows us perhaps how the mind of Dale was led to at least partial admission of the need of "something deeper and truer" than legal fictions as a clue to the central mystery of redemption.

The leaven of Grotius worked far and wide. Traces of it have been recognized in the greatest of American thinkers, Jonathan Edwards. His son, Jonathan Edwards the younger, went over to Grotianism bag and baggage, and exercised a wide influence. It is shrewdly observed by Bushnell,[1] in commenting on this New England theory of God's rectoral honour, that it is "never clear of the old view," *i.e.* of the penal theory. In other words, Bushnell recognizes in the New England writers what we recognized

[1] *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, pt. iii. ch. vi. pp. 310–11.

in Grotius, that the new view is essentially transitional.

In our own country also the theory gained ground. Samuel Johnson[1] calls attention to a tribute paid to Grotius by Richard Baxter.[2] Johnson told Boswell that he had not himself read Grotius' *De Satisfactione Christi*, but hoped to do so; and he added, "You may do so too." Curiously enough, at an earlier point in the same conversation, Johnson had enunciated views of the doctrine which one can only characterize as strongly Grotian. That strange theologian and very strange Christian, Boswell, is uneasy at having to record such utterances by his hero; a footnote adds the assurance that other utterances by Johnson made clear how firmly he believed in "the sacrifice of Christ."

Late in the eighteenth and early in the nineteenth century English and Scottish Congregationalism was strongly influenced by views which were essentially and in most details

[1] Boswell's *Tour to Hebrides*, ch. v.

[2] Dr. Powicke, a high authority on Baxter, thinks this must refer to a passage in *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, pt. i. p. 109. Apparently, Baxter's theology is not visibly tinged with Grotian ideas. His book on *Grotian Religion* is "an attack," and an attempt to show that "Grotius favoured Popery." According to M'Leod Campbell, Baxter "with Grotius" taught that Christ's sufferings were "equivalent" to sin's punishment, but "not identical."

Grotian. M'Leod Campbell registers these views under the title "Calvinism as recently modified," and very calmly and searchingly criticizes them. Josiah Gilbert, in the first of the Congregational Lectures, embodied the scheme in a *quasi*-official manifesto. Again, Richard Watson, the lawgiver of Methodist theology for more than a generation, certified that there were two safe and reliable doctrines of Atonement—the penal theory and the penal example theory. When Dale, in a later Congregational lecture, speaks of "an act of at least equal moral energy with punishment,"[1] he has been thought to show something of the Grotian infection.

We may explain to ourselves the movement of Grotius' mind, if only conjecturally, as follows: He wishes to define what are the principles of just (and wise) punishment. He is not satisfied that the bare fact of guilt demands penalty. It warrants punishment; but no human government will attempt to visit every moral fault with its exact due—and the great lawyer is approaching his task not in the light of the human family, nor yet in the light of abstract ethics, but as a student of politics and of administration. In other words, Grotius begins his task by divesting

[1] *Atonement*, p. 451, 25th ed.

punitive justice of the obligation to deal equally with all the guilty. Is this right or is it wrong? Justice has unquestionable affinities with equality. Is not *equity* one of its synonyms? Distributive justice would be surrendering its task and renouncing its ideal if it did not seek to hold the scales even. But is it possible to carry out the principle in the region of corrective justice?

A and B are both at fault, but A is punished while B escapes. Does the immunity of B make the punishment of A unjust? The implication of Grotius' thought is a negative answer. There is no injustice in punishing guilty A because guilty B goes free. A has no right to quarrel with the law merely because it does not overtake every one who was partner in his guilt. His "eye" is not to be "evil" because God's eye has been "good" — *i.e.* merciful or indulgent — towards the fellow-offender. Is this a true account of justice? Or is Grotius transferring all the imperfections of human justice to the administration of Him who "without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work"?

First of all, it is obvious to any one who knows children that nothing makes nursery discipline so odious as recognizable inequality. That one should be punished and that another

who has behaved as badly should escape is, to a child, loathsome injustice. His own guilt, even if admitted, will never silence him while his fellow-malefactor goes free. This is not a proof that the child's claim is just, though it is a plain enough indication of duty for those who have the government of children. They must not "provoke their children to wrath." Nursery discipline, however remote from standards of abstract justice, is meant to be an administration in terms of moral desert. It is the business of the parent or guardian to make no bad blunder in such matters. He *ought to know*!

In a law court, too, visible inequality is visibly unjust. Say that A and B are both charged; that the same evidence is led against both; that A is condemned and B acquitted. This "will never do." The case is clear. Not justice but injustice has prevailed. If, however, evidence breaks down against B while it is fairly conclusive against A, then A's punishment is just though, in point of fact, B may have been equally guilty and yet escapes.

But can this apply to *God's* justice? He knows everything; may He not be trusted to do exact justice in the end? Strangely, as we think, and yet unquestionably, such an affirmation raises great difficulties. A flies into a

passion, strikes his enemy, and kills him. He is a man-slayer, possibly a murderer, and must expect dreadful punishment. B flies into a similar passion. The blow he launches against his enemy "happens" to fall half an inch to right or left of the fatal spot. He inflicts a mere bruise; human justice laughs at the whole transaction, or closes it with a trumpery fine. Was A guiltier than B? He was infinitely unhappier! He can never forgive himself till the day of his death. If, then, B escapes—escapes altogether, or escapes with a paltry sentence—must A enjoy the same immunities? Is there to be a "most favoured nation clause" in the criminal law of God and men? Would that be just? Alternatively, must B be doomed to death or to hard labour, like A? Only a fantastic travesty of justice would result from such "equal" dealing.

Or again: B encounters temptation. But he meets it in one of his better hours. He has just parted from a friend—one of the best friends ever man had. The palm of B's hand is still warm with his friend's grasp; his friend's "God bless you" rings in his ears and in his heart. At such an hour temptation is no temptation whatever; it falls dead. But A meets the same temptation "in an hour of moral weakness," and stains himself indelibly. Can even the justice

of Heaven establish equality between these two cases?

One would infer, not that Heaven is unjust, but that literal equality is not always included in the highest equity. There are critical points where the curve breaks. Our age is intoxicated with the thought of continuity; but physical nature reveals tremendous discontinuities, and moral experience does the same. We know our dangers. We ought to remember them. We must act, and abstain from action, in the light of what we know. We dare not heedlessly strike a blow because most angry blows leave only trifling consequences. In indulging anger we take the risk of doing murder; and we know that the risk exists. We have no right to dally with temptation because others have gone to the edge of the cliff and have drawn back just in time. While no temptation is fatal, and no sin necessitated, we may "grieve the Spirit till He leaves us and tempt the devil till he comes to us."

These are the considerations that made a good man say at sight of a condemned criminal, "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford." The criminal is not guiltless, nor is his punishment unjust, because Bradford knows in his heart how nearly he fell into equal degradation, or how easily he might have done so.

The earth is a dreadful place, and the life of man is a terrible life. Moral evil is so widely diffused, so deeply and intricately entangled in our being.

> The best of all we do and are
> Just God forgive!

The upshot of this long digression, so far as it bears upon our estimate of Grotius' doctrine of Atonement, is that he was not without good reasons for questioning the assumptions on which moralism proceeds and which substitutionism fully accepts, that God and conscience establish an exactly measurable responsibility for sins, and an exact order of demerit among wrong-doers. Grotius expresses his dissent by implication rather than with full consciousness. Consciously, he is seeking to defend the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction. He believes himself to be maintaining that Christ was punished. But he seriously modifies the traditional form of the doctrine; and we must give him the credit of having detected or at least *felt* its pedantic character, and its lack of touch with real moral experience.

But Grotius' train of thought pushes things much further than this. In one passage he urges that actual moral experience—or actual experience of the administration of law, human

or divine—shows that the innocent may suffer with the guilty. And again, that the same experience shows how the guilty may not unsuitably escape. Put these two together, argues Grotius, and you get the Christian doctrine of Atonement. If each half is morally credible, can the whole be morally incredible? What a collapse is here! The "counter-imputations" of orthodox Protestant scholasticism were its pride and its strength, vindicating the ways of God to men. A modern might feel that the scheme was perilously like the affirmation that two blacks make a white; but it passed with its defenders for something eminently worthy of acceptance. In the hands of its new counsel, the great Grotius, the challenge which used to appeal for endorsement to every conscience has become a shrinking plea of "not guilty" or even perhaps of "not proven." *After all, the doctrine is not morally incredible;* suppose that were satisfactorily established, how poor the triumph would be!

And how can we accept Grotius' logic? Granted that either of two strains will not break down a bridge, we have no proof that the structure can endure both simultaneously. A fair probability, a 2 to 1 chance, is represented numerically by the fraction $\frac{2}{3}$. But, if the process has to be repeated, though each

part taken separately, stands for a 2 to 1 chance, the entire value is not $\frac{2}{3}$, but $\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{2}{3} = \frac{4}{9}$. Thus the probability of a probability may very well turn out to mean the improbability of the entire fact alleged.

But further still: if all this were granted to Grotius, he has yet to define the principles upon which the apparent demands of justice may be reconsidered, so as sometimes to be carried out but in other cases waived. The principle to which Grotius appeals is "rectoral" justice. What a ruler finds necessary for the good of his State—naturally, for its future good—that will be exacted, whether it be the just punishment of past wrong-doing or "penal" suffering on the part of an innocent person. Suffering which is not necessary for the ends of government will or may be remitted. Here it is that the deterrent theory of punishment, though not formulated by the great lawyer, begins to show its presence and to claim supremacy. Grotius thinks he is still asserting law, justice, punishment. In words he does so. But in logic he has broken with all these. His guiding star, for human or divine justice, is administrative necessity, or rather indeed administrative expediency; for in such calculations moral necessity disappears. Verbally, "penal example" might mean deserved punish-

ment of a wrong-doer when the infliction of punishment is necessary for the good of the State. But penal example in the case of the innocent Christ can only be regarded as a sacrifice to "rectoral justice," which turns out to mean a rectoral expediency that has not even a remote relationship to justice properly so-called. In fact, we have here the naked calculation of Caiaphas: "It is expedient that one man"—one innocent man—"should die for the people."

We agree, then, with some things in Grotius. Or, if not with his conscious theories, we agree with his subconscious feeling that justice, whether in normal administration and government or in the economy of the Christian redemption, cannot be reckoned to scale, as moralism teaches, and as the substitutionary doctrine presupposes. But his solution must be rejected with all possible resolution. Grotianism may be recommended to those who desire to retain the shell of the doctrine and do not care what happens to the kernel; but no informed mind which is truly earnest will tolerate it. We further agree that what Grotius suggests—he does not say it, though some of his followers do; it is indeed the opposite of what his own language affirms—that the salvation which is in Christ does not

come about through His bearing the punishment of sin. It comes about, we will add, in a diviner way. We may agree that the sufferings of Christ are in a certain analogy to human punishment, and take the place in the moral history of the world which might have been held by the infliction of penalty as the wages earned by sin. But while Grotius thinks the death of Christ not too completely a moral anomaly to serve as an inferior yet passable substitute for the punishment of sinners, we must hold that it is incomparably higher and more glorious than punishment — better for man, better in the sight of God, better for the whole moral universe. And, if we want a word to express this, we may avail ourselves of the old Biblical term sacrifice. In the sacrificial sufferings of the pure and holy Jesus, God is glorified and man is redeemed.

Still further perhaps we might agree with Grotius that the sufferings of Christ will be studied to greater profit in their bearing on human character than in their direct reference to the personal claim of God. But we must beware what kind of influence on the human mind we impute to Christ's sufferings. Grotius thinks of Calvary as a warning, or as an awful example. This is what happens to God's enemies! They get crucified! They go to

hell! On selfish grounds it behoves them to lay the warning to heart. It is not in such fashion that the Christian salvation can profit any human soul or any fellowship of redeemed men. Not by scaring us, but by regenerating us; by creating new motives; by breaking our hearts, and infusing into us a contrite spirit; does Christ rescue us.

There is no objection to holding that fear may play a part in conversion. "We mock God if we do not fear." If in terror itself there is an element of conscience, imputing our sufferings to us as justly deserved punishments, then even in terror there may be the moral protoplasm of a Christian heart and life. But this element of promise found in the low beginnings of repentance depends on the presence and on the recognition of *justice* in our sufferings, whether endured in the present or apprehended in a more dreadful future. And that is the element which Grotius drops out —unconfessedly, even unconsciously, but none the less certainly—from his theology of Atonement.

To tell us that God inflicted something hardly to be called punishment upon One who had not sinned, in order subsequently to remit the punishment of those who had sinned, and that He did this because He was sure that psycho-

logically sinners must now be convinced of the inevitable sequence of punishment upon sin—what theology is that for any place except a madhouse? And, if such indeed is God's calculation, why should theologians blab? It may be adorably wise to fire blank cartridge—such a volley makes a formidable noise. It may be adorably gracious to forbid the use of bullets—the noisy volley does no harm. But one thing would be fatal. You must not explain to the mob that all the charges have been drawn, or they will cease to be deterred from rioting.

And is this really what any Christian believes in his heart of heart about the sufferings of the Saviour, that they were designed to give us a salutary fright? The harsh old doctrine that Christ bore the pains of hell is dignified and beautiful compared with this contemptible scheme of administrative smartness.[1]

[1] Yet it ought to be confessed that not only Stevens but Denney views Grotius' innovation with strange leniency.

CHAPTER XI

R. W. Dale and the Fact of the Atonement

It is possible that the system upon which these studies are written does unusual injustice to Dale. The contribution which he seeks to offer goes much beyond the establishment of a distinction between fact and theory. At the same time, Dale is the greatest historical protagonist of the distinction in question.[1] His title-page with its quotation from Anselm implies an interesting parallel between his own proposed distinction and Anselm's treatment which, in mediævalist and Catholic fashion, contrasts what we grasp by simple faith—this is Dale's "fact"—with what we grasp by "understanding"—Dale's "theory." In the mediæval writer, theory wears the aspect of an intellectual luxury. It satisfies curiosity—the higher scientific curiosity, it is true, yet a thing

[1] When the present writer printed an address on "The Fact of the Atonement" in the *Expository Times*, he did not happen to be aware that he was ploughing with Dale's heifer.

confined to the world of intellect. The religious life of faith, moving on under God's mercy towards eternal salvation, is emphatically declared to be independent of theory. Dale attaches more value to right theory for the purposes of practical Christianity. Or at any rate he has a strong persuasion of the danger of wrong theories.

If Anselm in a sense represents a distinction similar to Dale's, we can name other predecessors. Ritschl quotes one Carpov, an orthodox divine with Wolffian affinities in philosophy, who held that the death of Christ must be added to the list of revealed mysteries, unintelligible but vital. After some vacillations of which Principal Franks gives an interesting record,[1] the mediæval mind—under the guidance of Albert the Great and his even more illustrious pupil St. Thomas—had settled down to the persuasion, first, that Theism is a rational certainty; second, that the distinctive theological dogmas of the Triune Deity and of the person of the Saviour rest exclusively upon revelation —reason being unable either to prove antecedently to revelation, or to understand subsequently. In spite of daring efforts by Duns and the later Nominalists to bring more or to

[1] The suggestions of Alexander of Hales are curious; Franks, i. pp. 228, 229.

bring everything into the region of what is rationally unvouched but authoritatively revealed, the Vatican Council has embodied the Thomist view among the dogmas of the Church of Rome. One who does not wear the spectacles of Romanism or of the older Protestant tradition may be pardoned for uttering a grave protest against such delimitation of the frontiers between "faith" and "reason." Does it not make revealed doctrine the merest *caput mortuum*? The word of life when so treated becomes a fossil.

A name much more important for the British mind has to be added. Approaching the subject under the guidance of other philosophical prepossessions, Bishop Butler describes Atonement with technical differences of language but full identity of meaning. He calls it not a revealed mystery, but a fact regarding whose inner nature we are left in the dark. Scripture has given no explanation of the great sacrifice. To speculate on the point would be equally presumptuous and useless. For "neither reason nor analogy" would prepare us to believe in the saving effects of the "interposition of Christ."[1] This is substantially the same attitude as Anselm's or Dale's, stated in terms of an

[1] *Analogy*, pt. ii., Conclusion. This is stronger even than the corresponding statement in ch. v.

empiricist philosophy; though it is more negative in its outlook towards theory.

The same extreme position has been repeated in our own time, with characteristic beauty of expression and depth of feeling, by Dr. R. F. Horton; first in an address delivered to the Summer School of Theology at Mansfield College in 1892,[1] then in the volume entitled *Faith and Criticism.* In Dr. Horton's treatment there is much more of the open vision of redeeming love than we can trace in that of the great eighteenth-century apologist. Yet technically they occupy the same ground. Here, of course, we are chiefly concerned with Dale's formulation. What shall we say of it?

Let us inquire, to begin with, what the "fact" in question is. In scriptural language — St. Paul's, but, if we believe that great master of the Christian mind, pre-Pauline too—the fact is this, that "Christ died for our sins." In Dale's language, the fact implies "some direct relation between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sins." One may question whether Dale's words cover the whole ground. Just and needful as it is to emphasize forgiveness, one doubts whether exclusive emphasis upon it is fair either to the teaching of the Bible or to the

[1] It evoked indirect but unmistakable protest from Principal Fairbairn.

instincts of the Christian heart. But in any case Dale is right on the main issue. Our "fact" cannot be a mere event in the record of human history—the execution of a religious teacher from Galilee outside the walls of Jerusalem. It is a fact of unending spiritual significance—the death of the Saviour of the world.

But Dale's concessions, if we may call them so, are pushed further. Salvation, he insists, is dependent on the fact that Christ died, but not inevitably or universally upon the saved man's recognition of the fact. So long as a man recognizes Christ as Saviour, he is within the circle of blessing. This is a quite astonishingly liberal and large-hearted position to be enunciated by so marked an evangelical and so strong a dogmatist; but Dale was too deeply rooted and grounded in the Gospel to feel the nervousness which forces lesser men to insist upon extreme claims on behalf of orthodoxy. Conceivably, Dale ought to have gone even further. It is worth consideration whether even conscious faith in Jesus Christ is necessary to personal Christianity. Humble trust in a God, clearly known or dimly felt to be highest righteousness and perfect love, may be Christian wherever it occurs—may indeed be regarded as the vital heart of Christianity. But when we bring the other faiths of mankind into com-

parison with the religion of the Bible (Old Testament or New), how little of trust do we find, and how very little of humble trust! Whatever sporadic workings of the Spirit of redemption may elsewhere appear, the Saviour of the world is the creator for the world of those streams of living water—humility, penitence, faith in God.

Of course, in speaking thus, we imply that Dale's affirmations are essentially true. To praise a Christian for being large-hearted, if his liberality were exercised at the cost of God's truth, would be folly indeed. There are difficulties, with which we must try to deal later, regarding Dale's very sharp contrast of fact and theory. But, whatever reserves may be necessary in view of such unexplored difficulties —will Dale's critics dare to say that he was wrong? Can any child of man who responds to the grace of Jesus Christ—who loves, who trusts, who follows Him—can any such a one be unsaved for lack of a correct estimate of Christ's death? His error involves loss to him, unquestionably; but does it disinherit him outright? And if indeed he is saved, how else can he be saved than by Christ's death? Assuredly Dale is right; it is the fact of Christ's death that saves the world, not our adequate recognition of its underlying *rationale*.

We may hope to throw some light upon the

problem of fact and theory by examining parallels in other regions. To whom does beauty mean most—to the art-critic who can dissect and analyse the grounds of æsthetic pleasure, or to unsophisticated intuition, which simply enjoys what is good and turns away by instinct from what is unworthy? There is something very attractive in the thought of an art-lover of the second type. Further, does science help the artist? Or will there not always be danger, as with Goethe and perhaps with George Eliot, that the scientific impulse may kill the imaginative? And is there not risk of a connoisseurship which will treat works of art as specimens for a museum, and when it has pigeon-holed them will find no more enjoyment in contemplating them?

The case is not dissimilar when we turn to consider religion. It is one of the difficult tasks of an educated piety to-day to read Christ's words of life and feel their force, rather than diverge into the labyrinth of the Synoptic problem. And to whom does religious truth belong most securely—to the master-minds of Christian thought, or to "babes"? Is it really true, as Jesus once affirmed, that little children are most at home in the kingdom of God? And do we want our young children to be experts in orthodoxy?

We thank God for the gifts of intellect. Its pleasures are high, and even its perils are worthy. But we bless God with a fuller heart for those simplicities which are profound and for those profundities which are so simple. As I write, I have in my recollection, from thirty-five years back in my life, a Scottish peasant offering prayer at a week-night service in the little town of Douglas in Lanarkshire. Already my own mind was occupied with the great problems of this doctrine of Atonement. But I felt that George Wilson went right home to the heart of truth in a way which I could not then achieve—and now I feel I can hardly hope ever to compass it. There were others in that little fellowship, which I was serving for a short time, who were cut more closely to the regulation pattern. I do not speak against them. They were respected by their neighbours, and did no discredit to conventional faith or godliness. But this man "had learned in Nature's school," or in the Spirit's. He was no critic; he was no modernist; but St. Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews had shown him the heart of Christ and of the God and Father of our Lord in the heavenly places. He knew the permanent things of the Gospel. Its essential faith and hope and love lived in him and blossomed and bore fruit. Of course he had

his New Testament. And the New Testament is full of great affirmations regarding God and the Christian salvation. But, on the other hand, the New Testament is nowhere occupied with truth apart from life. And, of all the difficult unsolved problems which the New Testament bequeathed to after ages, this peasant Christian knew and needed to know nothing. Such knowledge would only have injured the perfect beauty of a simple, dignified, holy, and happy child of God. Not Calvinism and not the Shorter Catechism had made him what he was, but higher and purer springs.

In spite of such thoughts, one will hope that in the end

> Mind and soul according well
> May make one music as before,
> But vaster.

The kingdom of God is not governed by any monotonous Act of Uniformity. For its full perfection, it will need childlike representatives of instinctive piety, but also those who while "children in malice" are "in understanding, men." One will hope that even art-criticism may emerge from the conceit of enlightenment, and become the minister of a fuller æsthetic enjoyment.

There is need perhaps to correct the sharp contrast between "fact" and "theory," like the

other sharp contrast between the "knowable" and the "unknowable," insisting rather upon continuity and slow gradations. We have not full noon upon one side of an imaginary line, and midnight just across it. What is certain shades off into what is probable, then doubtful, then improbable, and finally into what is meaningless. We must not calculate more places of decimals than our data warrant. Plainly, the Christian Society as a whole is more in need of theological theory than is any individual member of the society. Probably two different minds have different capacities for exact detail, and also — what is vitally significant in religion — different capacities for keeping theology in touch with personal godliness. There is danger in suggesting excuses like this for dogma-spinning! Pious conservative minds can always hang practical corollaries upon any authoritative positions which they accept. That is only a seeming verification of dogma at the bar of practice. At its best it is an innocent blunder; at its worst it is a trick. Nevertheless, positions which are liable to misunderstanding and abuse may yet be true. And if our theology were more cautious, more really reverent, more experimental, and less swollen with dead traditional stuff, there would not be such diffi-

culty in connecting its theories with the central things in the Christian life.

Accordingly, we may feel entire confidence in rejecting the hard antithesis between fact and theory. Apologetic must necessarily give its "reasons for the hope that is in it"; and every Christian must in good measure be an apologist to-day. Moreover, Dogmatic itself is just Apologetic restated in firmer tones. Principal Franks would go so far as to affirm that Dale simply contrasts one vaguer theory with other theories drawn out into fuller detail. That is rather an extreme statement. It might be more correct to say that some element of theory, some apprehension of meaning, attaches to every fact which enters the world of human knowledge; else it were no fact at all, but at the most—*sit venia verbo*—a "statistic." When we contrast "fact" with "theory" we contrast certainty with what is uncertain. The "hypothesis" as such stands lower even than theory; on the other hand, the "working hypothesis" lays claim to a strong pragmatic verification. Again, fact contrasts with theory or hypothesis as the real with the mere symbol useful to science for calculation or to faith for suggestion of the indefinable. But, once again: Fact is the whole truth of ascertainable and valid theory in contrast with the half lights

and one-sidednesses which play so great a part in philosophy and theology. The real is not the unknowable; rather it corresponds to the perfect wholeness of knowledge. Still, we who are imperfect may get nearer to reality by preserving a strong sense of the defectiveness of all the theories with which we have to work. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; and yet we know the true God, and live the eternal life.

A theory is never a fact any more than a relation is, as has rashly been said, a quality. But qualities are only manifested in relations—relation between thing and thing or between a thing and the human sensibility. And a fact is only available for knowledge if we construct theories of its meaning—always imperfect, but always capable of correction and growth. Accordingly, fact is never exhausted in theory or lost in theory; at the same time, it can never be divorced from theory. To adapt a well-known formula: theories without facts are "empty," and facts without theory are "blind." It is the sense that all facts in which God is concerned are "more than . . . our little systems" which leads to the opinion, untenable as we must judge it, that theory and system can and ought to be banished.

We turn now from the mere separation between fact and theory to study the peculiarities of the special theory for which Dale stands. Polemically he is very powerful. He conducts an overwhelming assault upon the view that New Testament utterances regarding Atonement and Early Church expressions of faith in redemption can be satisfied by a mere doctrine of moral or psychological influence. When he proceeds to construction, it is his own turn to undergo the ordeal of cross-examination; and the able if unsympathetic treatment dealt out to him by Stevens is tolerably damaging.

Upon the whole, Dale may be said to stand for the Reformation positions. He believes in eternal and immutable righteousness; he does not give the happiest expression to this noble truth when he speaks of an eternal "law," but he is following in the wake of a long-continued tradition both philosophical and theological. He holds the retributive conception of punishment; and again one thinks, rightly. He believes that Christ glorified the law and served the interests of righteousness by enduring punishment. But discussion has not been without effect upon Dale's mind. He cannot be so unreflective as were the Reformers in asserting a penal doctrine of Atonement. I believe we shall best understand him as

trying to secure such alleviations of the difficulty as will make the penal doctrine not unacceptable to a thoughtful conscience. Of course he has a reserve line of defence in his distinction between fact and theory. Even if his own theory should fail, he is not prepared to surrender the saving Fact.

Taking the theory by itself, we observe a broad general analogy between Dale's views and those of Grotius. If we may be allowed to say so, Dale is the better man and the better Christian. Also he is more conscious of what he is about. Grotius means to do one thing, but does another. He means to defend the penal view of satisfaction, but in effect he drags Christian doctrine down to the plane of political expediency. Yet there is something in Dale's formulation as well as in his effort or outlook which recalls Grotius to one's mind. The statements which Dale offers vary to some extent from passage to passage. Without precisely following any one of these passages, we may enumerate four considerations on which he relies to alleviate the difficulty of believing that Christ was punished for us.

Firstly. He holds that there was an original *a priori* relation between Christ as the eternal Logos of God and moral law. Law was His own personal institution. He was its revealer.

He was peculiarly wronged by its infringement, and peculiarly interested in its rehabilitation. The apparent moral anomaly of His interfering on behalf of the broken law is thought to be much attenuated if we place a just estimate upon this fact, or—shall we say?—if we keep before our minds this strange theory.

Secondly. Christ as the Divine Word was also in a unique *a priori* relation to mankind. If the law was peculiarly His appointment, the human race was in a very special sense His creation, or were even His brethren; and that independently of incarnation. The imputability of their fault to Him need not be based merely or chiefly—as by Anselm and the general orthodox tradition—upon incarnation as a fact in history. Still less is union with Christ to be based upon the faith of individual converts. There is a deeper union. As Christ *qua* Logos was peculiarly interested in moral law, so also He was peculiarly touched and grieved and one might almost say compromised by human sin. This is, as one passage in Dale frankly owns, the central thought of F. D. Maurice's theology. Only while in Maurice it stands alone to cover the whole truth regarding Atonement—viz., men and Christ are one, indissolubly, from creation onwards—with Dale this mystic relationship forms part of a complex structure.

And while—like Schleiermacher—Maurice, with his Alexandrian preoccupations, hardly knows what to say about the death on Calvary, Dale very well knows that Christ died for our sins. Whatever may be shaken, he feels that that stands firm. According to Maurice, who supports the ingenious speculation by bad exegesis, "the true sinless root of humanity is revealed" not in Adam but in Christ Jesus the Logos. According to Dale, Christ who is our Brother by creation has by Himself purged our sins in His death. But the second aspect of Logos theology is held to bring the mystery of Atonement considerably nearer to our powers of belief.

Thirdly. Christ's Atonement makes provision not merely for standing but for character. It carries with it not simply forgiveness, or justification, or the sunshine of God's friendship—it carries with it also new strength for the moral task and the assurance of moral victory through Him that loved us. Probably this aspect of Dale's doctrine is obscure; with still greater confidence we may call it true and vital and Christian. It is less of a dreamy speculation than either of the considerations already brought to our notice. R. C. Moberly would throw it out, as inconsistent with what seems to him most distinctive and—

shall we add?—most dislikable in Dale. There is a fragment of justice in this criticism. Dale's thought may seem to lack organic unity. It is an aggregation of separable parts—a cumulative argument marching from point to point in the hope of gradually rendering morally credible what had threatened to prove incredible for the riper Christian conscience. Yet why must this part in particular drop out? Dale is meeting the accusation that the justice of the Atonement means injustice or means moral indifference. This particular answer insists that the Atonement provides for practical righteousness on the part of man as nothing else could do. It would be a strange and cruel pedantry to expurgate Dale's book of its noblest element. Whatever else goes or must be recast, this part of Dale's system strikes right home to the Christian conscience and heart.

Finally. When we consider that Christ does not inflict upon a stranger but endures personally the penalty of a broken law, the last shadow of moral difficulty is thought to disappear from the faith of Christendom. One hardly knows which to say—that, for Dale, penal substitution is morally credible in the light of (1), (2), (3), and (4); or that in the light of (1), (2), and (3), though the substitution of a penal victim remains morally monstrous, yet

the lawgiver's personal endurance of penalty becomes morally credible, morally glorious, morally healing. In some sense, it is just here that Dale most plainly suggests Grotius. Christ as God's vicegerent must either punish, or else exhibit "some moral act of at least equal intensity." The general principle appealed to has a strongly Grotian flavour; the special moral act contemplated by Dale transcends governmentalism. And again, no contrast could be greater than between Grotius' calm general statement that, while punishment is vitally necessary, there is no special need that punishment should fall on the right man, and Dale's laborious plea that, *given* Christ's connexion with moral law, *given* His creative connexion with mankind, *given* the redemptive power for character contained in fellowship with Him, *given* that he punishes Himself—we may, we must believe, and believing adore.

One may feel, in presence of so elaborately ingenious a construction, that it is well Dale has preserved a possible line of retreat. Especially one hesitates as to the lawgiver's punishment of himself. None the less we are plainly in the presence of a powerful mind and—what is greater still by far—of a deeply Christian heart. And yet, it is hardly by a cumulative set of pleas in arrest of judgment that we can

vindicate the Christian faith in Atonement. With all his high qualities, Dale must have chosen the wrong way of approaching the great theme. A better theology must restate the problem and remodel the solution.

CHAPTER XII

Theories of Vicarious Penitence

We know that the mediæval Sacrament of Penance contained three parts — Contrition, Confession, Satisfaction—and that the last of the three, with all its ambiguity, gave the watchword to the Catholic and Protestant theology of Atonement. External acts of satisfaction are transferable, whether justly or not. In parts of the mediæval world, as Principal Franks records, transference of ecclesiastical satisfactions was organized into a branch of commerce. If, however, the emphasis were to shift from satisfactions to the more inward and spiritual elements of the Sacrament of Penance, we might have a theology of Atonement which, while still running parallel to ideas of penance, represented Christ as repenting and confessing sin on our behalf, not as bearing penalties or *quasi*-penalties by way of satisfaction. We meet with such a theology, but not all at once. It is formed slowly and gradually ; and as first shaped it has little to do with sacraments.

In his able Cunningham Lectures on the *Humiliation of Christ*, in the course of an unsympathetic and almost contemptuous reference to M'Leod Campbell's teaching, A. B. Bruce asks us to believe that Rupert of Deutz had anticipated Campbell. What he quotes from Rupert is a description of Christ on His way to baptism as an ideal penitent. Even if we make the most of that casual utterance, what claim has it to rank as a theory of the atoning death? Alexander of Hales[1] makes contrition in the penitent a prolongation of Christ's passion; there seems to be in the context no distinct recognition of contrition or *quasi*-contrition in Christ Himself. Franks finds such a reference, however, in the greatest of all mediæval system-builders, St. Thomas Aquinas.[2] "Christ's pain exceeded the pain of all and every penitent—His grief was for all sins at once." Yet Franks goes on to warn us that, when Thomas is considering how Christ's work avails for His people, the emphasis falls upon "penitential satisfaction rather than . . . penitential contrition."[3] He concludes further[4] that Thomas "regards a [true?] vicarious contrition as impossible; it is

[1] As summarized by Franks, *Work of Christ*, i. p. 243.
[2] Pp. 283–4.
[3] P. 286.
[4] P. 287.

after all only the *satisfactio operis* that can be vicarious."

Distinctly more striking is the teaching of the late and extreme Nominalist, Gabriel Biel. "None of the repentant ever had so great contrition and grief for his own sins, as in that hour of satisfaction the Lord had for the sins of each and all. His contrition . . . paid the whole penalty owed for them."[1] It is unnecessary to point out that this theory of repentance or *quasi*-repentance is still merged in a theory of punishment or *quasi*-punishment. The attempt, quoted from Gottschick,[2] to find a trace of Biel's view in Luther does not succeed in establishing its case with any certainty. Accordingly, mediæval approaches to a doctrine of repentance on the part of Christ, as offered to God and accepted by Him in view of human sin, are not more precise or telling than are the patristic and mediæval approaches to a doctrine of Christ's punishment. Both doctrines are tentative, incidental, casual. It remained for Protestantism to take the doctrine of a penal atonement in deadly earnest; though modern Romanism has not been far behind.

Similarly it remained for a later school of Protestant evangelicalism to turn in its own

[1] Franks, i. p. 334. [2] *Ibid.* p. 376.

way to the thought of Christ's repentant mind on behalf of the sin of His brethren as a clue to the mystery of Atonement. The suggestion arises incidentally in Jonathan Edwards. Helped by Edwards, but not originally dependent on him, John M'Leod Campbell develops the doctrine of vicarious penitence in his devotional and theological masterpiece, *The Nature of the Atonement.* The Roman Catholic scholar Rivière calls our attention to R. W. Monsell's *The Religion of Redemption* (1870) as continuing the tradition. This book is the work of a Congregational pastor at Neufchâtel who was much under the influence of Vinet. He apologizes to the reader for possible Gallicisms, as he has been for years "speaking and thinking in a foreign language." The learning and the piety of the volume deserve all respect. At the same time, it is not an important contribution to thought. The author, who quotes very widely, repeatedly reproduces M'Leod Campbell's statements of his distinctive views; but he also adopts the language of the penal theory, from which Campbell had found it necessary to emancipate himself.

Campbell's central thought receives memorable expression, along with new elements—philosophical or speculative, legal, sacramental — in R. C. Moberly's *Atonement and*

Personality. Dr. Moberly's son repeats a similar statement, with less of the new emphasis, yet apparently with entire loyalty to his father's views, in *Foundations.* R. A. Lipsius of Jena[1] finds expiation in Christ's confession of our ill-desert; the word expiation is unusual in this school of thought, and the word repentance does not seem to occur; still, it is a parallel, if only a partial parallel, and is all the more interesting as dissociated in this fine ethical rationalist from the Church doctrine of Christ's full deity. The parallels quoted from the Lutheran standard-bearer Thomasius[2] are extremely shadowy. A recent massive and telling statement of a closely kindred doctrine is furnished by Haering, most maturely in his *Dogmatic.* So far as I have observed he does not name any predecessors.

No fewer than three hints in Jonathan Edwards lead up to Campbell's subsequent treatment. *Firstly:* there is the central suggestion; Atonement could only take place on the ground of equivalent punishment or of "equivalent repentance." For Edwards himself, the second is an empty logical possibility. He does not dream of exploring that road. Campbell explores it and makes memorable discoveries. *Secondly:* in his account of the

[1] See Franks' Summary. [2] Franks, ii. pp. 310, 311.

—supposedly penal — sufferings of Christ, Edwards is led to define these sufferings as being "such as a perfectly holy and perfectly loving being" could experience. This brings him very near Campbell's examination of Christ's recorded sufferings, which Campbell again does not hesitate to sum up as repentance for His brethren's sin blending with trust in God's eternal mercy. *Thirdly:* Edwards expounds Christ's obligation as man to love all men, and traces His fulfilment of it. God's law was one of love; Christ came under that law, and obeyed it. Abelard long before had insisted on the same point. Campbell, however, argues that such a truth breaks up and destroys the Augustinian-Calvinist thesis of a limited—and thus more strictly substitutionary—Atonement. That is an inference as far beyond Abelard's thought as beyond the horizon of those upon whom Campbell is bearing down with his gentle but crushing criticism. How can the force of this criticism be evaded? Was it part of Christ's necessary moral perfection to love all men, good and bad? And did He love them at every moment? And did the book-keeping of heaven arbitrarily intervene to decree that this victory of love in Christ should not rank as an Atonement except when the Elect were concerned?

Mr. Mozley has accused Campbell of identifying Edwards too closely with the old theology. It appears unquestionable that at times Edwards speaks in Grotian language, pioneering for his son. Nevertheless, Edwards adhered to a harsher Calvinism than almost any other Christian mind has dared to defend. And he believed in Christ's "feeling in Himself the revenges" of the divine wrath. If we place Edwards' views on Atonement in a sufficiently wide perspective, we shall see that Campbell is essentially right.

In summarizing Edwards' half-conscious approaches to a new conception of Atonement, we have been led to anticipate much of M'Leod Campbell's own treatment. What made most impression on the public mind in Campbell's book was the theory of vicarious repentance or confession; and that is our own special subject in the present chapter. But, as with others, so with this profound and saintly thinker, we are bound to say something further regarding individual peculiarities of treatment. And in Campbell's case we have much more offered for our acceptance than simply the central position.

Campbell's history as a Christian teacher and pastor began with a religious revival. Appointed to be minister of the parish of Row,

he came, as a godly man in his flock warned him, to a "sleeping people." His awakening ministry urged specially God's claim for immediate trust—a message peculiarly opportune in days when the prison of Calvinism was still in good repair. Believe! he cried. What are we to believe? they answered. Believe, he insisted, that you are redeemed. How can we believe that if redemption is confined to an elect few? Thus Campbell's practical needs, whether or not they guided his thoughts wisely at all points, forced him to challenge the specific Calvinist-Augustinian dogma which hampered the delivery of the Gospel's message of mercy. Along with certain vague inklings of a new view regarding the *nature* of Atonement, Campbell boldly announced its wider *extent*—Christ had died for all. Here he was in line with the New Testament, and notably with St. Paul, that great patron of Calvinistic and Augustinian theologies. But he ceased to be in line with the Confession of Faith ;[1] and for this fault the General Assembly of his Church—moderates and evangelicals in full accord—deposed him from the holy ministry as if he had been a man of bad character ; and the revival at Row stopped.

Campbell's preaching did not stop. While

[1] Though Campbell resisted that admission until the blow had fallen. A. J. Scott saw more clearly.

his health permitted he ministered to a small gathering in the neighbourhood of Glasgow; and, when he retired to an even quieter life at Roseneath, looking across to his old and well-loved parish, he commended his hearers to the Established Church of Scotland, to whose ministrations he also betook himself. Yet he had definitely dropped Calvinism, the nominal creed to-day, and the actual creed in 1830, of all Presbyterian Churches. And his reasoned aversion to Calvinism did much to shape his new views of Atonement. Calvinistic friends urged on him that a penal and legal substitution, with counter-imputations between Christ and His people, went naturally—to say no more—with the conception of limitation of redemption by divine decree to the precise number actually saved. For that very reason, Campbell felt he must break with penal views of Atonement. It was unthinkable that a doctrine should be true which made necessary or even made probable the arbitrary limitation of redeeming love to some only out of the multitude of God's unhappy human children. Christian theology must teach not a legal but a moral and spiritual Atonement. We must separate our faith in the atonement for sin from delusive conceptions of the vicarious endurance of our punishment. "And with this distinction," he exclaims, "what

a flood of light enters our minds!" As early in his life as 1856, he was able to bring out the first edition of his great book.

There are several unifying principles at work in Campbell's theology. They converge, and lend support to one another.

Firstly, we may note his faith in the divine Fatherhood, as the ultimate truth, and the deepest ground of our hope in God. Campbell felt in traditional Protestantism the view we have noted in an American author, that God is essentially just but accidentally loving.[1] At the same time, Campbell will not antagonize the divine Fatherhood to the Christian Atonement. "To trace redemption to its ultimate root in the divine Fatherliness, and to regard that Fatherliness as leaving no room for the need of redemption, are altogether opposite apprehensions of the grace of God."

Secondly, therefore, we have the fact of the Atonement—may we not use that phrase?—"to be studied in its own light."[2] Campbell's intellectual race was run before the modern critical movement had touched British piety.

[1] Dear and honoured friends, of the old school, resented this assertion when I told them it was involved in their views. But in Dr. A. H. Strong *habetamus confitentem reum.*

[2] I am indebted to R. W. Monsell's book for the information that *this* phrase, within the inverted commas, was borrowed by Campbell from John Newton.

To him, the Bible is uniformly divine. It is by a rightness of spiritual tact rather than by any reasoned correction of belief in infallible inspiration that Campbell escapes the narrowness of later Protestant orthodoxy. But he strikes for the centre. It is not even the testimony of the Epistles—highly and rightly though he values that testimony—but "the facts themselves *devotionally* studied"[1] that help him most. Once and again he travels through the Gospel record of Christ the Sufferer. Christ represents man before God—retrospectively (repentance) and prospectively (intercession). Christ represents God to men retrospectively (announcing God's condemnation of sin) and prospectively (announcing "the hope that there is for us in God" and "the gift of eternal life"). Dr. Denney, though he has ample praise for Campbell, fears that there is something artificial in this elaboration. We have felt rather that it stands equal or superior to Ritschl's recasting of the Scheme of the Three Offices of the Redeemer. There is indeed in Campbell a wonderful union of divine gifts—the mystic's overpowering sense of unity, the scientific dialectician's mastery of distinctions.

Thirdly, Campbell appeals to conscience.

[1] To modify for our purpose a phrase from the preface to *Ecce Homo*.

Here we are made to feel his affinity with Dale and with the presuppositions of historical Protestantism. He will have nothing to say to the neo-Grotianism of the English Nonconformists. "Rectoral justice" throws him back upon absolute justice; apart from the latter he can give it no meaning. He is sure that sin deserves suffering; that guilt is real; that God's anger against sin is morally inevitable. He approaches very near the old view when he speaks of Christ enduring and "exhausting" the Divine anger.[1] When Campbell's Broad Church critics told him that this part of his Retrospective doctrine was out of harmony with most of his teaching, he replied that neither Scripture nor conscience would allow him to drop it. And we may well hold that something akin to expiation or satisfaction is indispensable to a full-orbed Christian theology; though we may doubt whether Campbell's formulation can stand precisely as he leaves it.

On the connexion between Christ and mankind, Campbell's views seem peculiarly obscure. To him, Christ is frankly and fully divine antecedently to the study of His atoning work; St. Paul's testimony is accepted as conclusive on that point. Apparently it is the fact of

[1] That suggestion deserves fuller treatment than can be given in the present chapter. On this see further Chap. XV.

incarnation, and not any speculative belief in affinities between mankind and the pre-incarnate Logos, which is viewed as giving Christ His right to plead on our behalf. On the other hand, one judges that it is Christian divinity which is held to make Him "groom to every bride." At any rate, Campbell clearly believes in a connexion between Christ and His people far deeper than example on one side and imitation on the other. We are "branches in the Vine." "What was an atonement in Christ is Christianity in us." He is "given us, as our Life."

The revision of Campbell's views by R. C. Moberly is pretty drastic in several respects. Campbell pleads, in reply to criticisms by Martineau, that he thinks he has escaped both the Scylla of the ancient Realism and the Charybdis of the modern Individualism. Moberly, helped by Wilfrid Richmond and indirectly no doubt[1] by Hegel, revises the conception of personality. Personality is not really exclusive. In God or in man it is inclusive. No one is entirely or exclusively himself. Every one is more or less every one else. This if accepted undermines all objections to the justice of substitution *qua* sub-

[1] As Franks insists.

stitution, and — what is more to Moberly's purpose—makes it not incredible but eminently credible that we should find a Saviour in Jesus Christ. Moberly goes on to rebuke Campbell for seeming to speak of Christ as a third party interposing *between* God and men. He is "inclusively God" and "inclusively humanity." This is very hard doctrine. We may suffer it as one of those obscure speculations which must be permitted to persons who think they profit by them; but such things ought never to be intruded into our statement of God's central message of salvation. Does not a New Testament epistle tell us that "there is one Mediator between God and man"? Moberly's testimony to the Athanasian Creed might seem to be more in place here: "These are the familiar words, the authority of which is not likely to be challenged." Is it safe to correct a New Testament epistle in the light of a modern speculation? Is it seemly to treat such a speculation as entering into the very heart of the faith?

There is another side to Moberly's doctrine of personality. "Punishment is only possible in a person." "Penitence can only be personal." "Forgiveness is only possible towards a person." To these positions we must allow much more value. [We return to the subject in Chap. XV.]

Moberly's second revision is in the interests of sacramentalism. That is not how he puts it, but apparently that and little besides is what he means. What he says is that "Pentecost" is unduly neglected by Campbell and by theological tradition before him in seeking to construe the significance of Atonement. If we are to take this literally, it is an entirely new demand. Whatever faults theology has committed, theologians were probably quite right in regarding the gift of God's Spirit as the fruit of the atoning work of Christ and not as a part of it. But we must remember that Moberly is a High Churchman. For him, sacraments are the most spiritual of all spiritual things. His postulate amounts to this, that repentance is an incomplete thing till each soul is brought through penitence to perfection, and that sacraments—endowed by Christ with new and strange efficacy—are the central means of saving grace.

It is necessary to speak frankly on this matter. Especially is frankness called for at the present moment, when the Free and Protestant Churches are being rushed towards ill-conceived schemes of corporate ecclesiastical union—schemes which could accrue for good to no party except the sacramentalists. We who are Protestant evangelicals must stand for

the truth of the Gospel, giving place by way of subjection for not so much as an hour. And the truth is this, that sacraments can play no distinctive part whether in theology or in the Christian salvation. As the old phrase goes, they add nothing to the "message of the word"; they do but movingly reiterate it. As we might prefer to express the *caveat* for ourselves, faith includes everything whether sacraments are present or absent; *crede et manducasti*. Faith is the Alpha and Omega of a Christian's relation to God. In and with faith we have the sure promise of every blessing. It is possible that Protestantism has unduly depreciated sacraments. The Lord's Supper[1] would appear to be the original sacred germ or cell out of which the whole Christian Church as an institution was evolved. Within the life of that institution, the Eucharist proves itself a vehicle of fellowship between Christian and Christian, and much more between Christian and Christ. It is God's wonderful gift to His people. But essential to salvation? Never, and nevermore! We dare not allow Moberly's peculiar blend of Atonement-theology with sacramental theology to rob us of what our fathers termed "the finished work of Christ." "Once

[1] Or the apostolate *plus* the Lord's Supper.

in the end of the ages He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Moberly's third revision is legal. This legal element has been implied in the remarks just made, but it requires special notice and fuller consideration. Forgiveness, says Moberly, is "provisional." In support of this assertion, he quotes the parable of the Unforgiving Servant with its grim close. (But that is a parable!) We are gradually more and more forgiven as we draw nearer to God and grow dearer to Him, till at last forgiveness is consummated in "love's embrace of holiness." *There is no full forgiveness till nothing is left to forgive.*

In a very true sense, forgiveness is not conditional but absolute. In a very true sense, forgiveness is that wonderful act of God whereby His love embraces *unholiness.* As St. Paul's daring paradox puts it, praising in the gospel of God what the Old Testament had rebuked in human life with severest blame, God "justifies the *ungodly.*" It is doubtless true as Dale taught — with discomfort to Moberly, who wished to be able to condemn Dale without reserve—that God would not forgive unless He also renewed the character of those forgiven. But we are not forgiven in proportion as we grow better; God forbid! and again, God forbid! When we are worst

we need it most, and He grants it freely. Forgiveness or justification is no mere chronological anticipation of the facts. It is the glorious mystery of God's saving love. Much has to be pardoned to the author of *Some Loose Stones*, hovering on the brink of Romanism when he wrote and having long since taken the plunge. What has a Christian mind to do with exhibitions of extreme perverse cleverness? But much may be pardoned in one who grasps the great truth, that forgiveness is not God's last gift but the first of all. That is the soul of evangelical Protestantism; a truth as eternal as the Lord whose grace it declares to this dying and—apart from Him—this helpless and hopeless world. And we are thankful to believe that even under the Roman tyranny, with all its crimes and scandals, the gospel of God's grace lives and breathes and saves some.

It ought to be recognized that Moberly is attempting to deal with a problem always visible in Christian theology, and especially urgent under Protestantism. How are two aspects of the Christian salvation to be related to each other—deliverance from guilt, and deliverance from bondage under the power of sin? Moberly gives a definite answer; but unfortunately the answer is wrong. He follows the lines of legalism. The essence of salvation

is the new life; forgiveness is incidental, secondary, consequent upon progress in holiness, incomplete, "provisional." On the chance of solving a neglected problem, we are required to jettison the central Christian hope —the very gospel of the grace of God. The price is too high. The bargain is bad.

At another point in his treatment Moberly seems to reveal much uncertainty—viz. as to the meaning of punishment. Mainly, punishment is taken as remedial. It "begins" as such. It may pass, however, into "pure vengeance" when there is obstinate resistance to the gracious will of God. Vengeance, unrelieved vengeance, is its character in "hell." All this is strangely combined with another statement that "retribution" belongs to punishment only "in its human imperfection," and with still another, that "remorse" or "the penal misery of a sinner's conscience" is a possible starting-point for repentance. Truth and error seem curiously mixed in these affirmations. In any case, they cannot all be true; for they are incompatibles. It is to be feared that Moberly's teaching has had disastrous influence in undermining belief in justice, human or divine; also that — as so often happens — the extravagance of the disciples is far surpassing that of the teacher.

To-day, the contemporary mind is moth-eaten with the opinion that the punishment of sin is curative medical treatment and nothing else. That plainly is not Moberly's conviction; but we cannot acquit him of having suggested and at times encouraged the error.

In M'Leod Campbell's hands, the theory of Atonement by repentance and confession recognizes the moral necessity of repentance in order to forgiveness, and the corresponding moral necessity of forgiveness when repentance has arisen.[1] Campbell assumes from Scripture the possibility and necessity of a divine-human Saviour as the fountain-head of this new spirit; and he calls the anguish experienced by Christ by the same name—repentance. The use of the word in regard to the sinless Saviour has been much criticized. Even Denney is inclined to think that Campbell overstepped the line at this point. But he recognizes that, apart from this verbal nicety, Campbell has made an adoring study of real facts in Christ and in the Christian salvation, and that these facts must at the least have their place in any worthy doctrine of the Atonement.

[1] It is all too modern when the suggestion is made of moral improvement *not* by repentance. As well talk of a circle without a curve, or of a square without angles. What else is a sinner's moral improvement but repentant sorrow for the past, and repentant hope and purpose for the future?

Why, then, must Christ die? On the premises of the theory, it would seem that suffering unto death was needed in order to perfect the God-man's vision of the evil of sin, which in its turn was to become the spring of repentance and of holiness in all His people. This is at any rate hinted by Campbell. One may doubt whether it is clearly stated by any representative of the theory. Yet this inference appears to be implied in the premises upon which the whole theory depends.

Critics of Campbell will insist that he cannot raise beyond the rank of a hypothesis his belief that Christ's sorrow was the essence of the atoning sacrifice. For Scripture nowhere defines Atonement in such terms. Thoughtful readers must decide what degree of importance attaches to this consideration. It is probable that different minds will answer the question differently.

Moberly's form of the doctrine might perhaps fairly be described as a doctrine of salvation by penance—in Christ and in us—rather than by repentance. And penance is contemplated in its twofold aspect. There is inward sorrow; and there is outward suffering. We must not, however, impute to Moberly the thought of penance as conceived by a vulgar Catholic mind, which pays its appointed tribute to

Church discipline and comes away feeling "so clean." Much rather does he reproduce a profoundly godly but imperfectly Christian mind like Pusey's, for whom life is one prolonged and extremely doubtful penitence. What Bushnell[1] said of Campbell, what Mr. R. A. Knox[2] has said of the younger Mr. Moberly, are criticisms much more fully deserved by Moberly senior. Let his closing words speak for themselves. "It is to Calvary, not as ourselves but as Calvary, that in the breaking up of ourselves we most earnestly desire to hold fast. We are left, here at least and now, still gazing as from afar, not in fruition but in faith, on that which we have *not* realized in ourselves. We are still kneeling to worship, with arms outstretched from ourselves in a wonder of belief and loving adoration, that reality wholly unique and wholly comprehensive, the Figure of Jesus crucified."

One feels as if one were worshipping in some thronged crypt, dark with stained glass, the air heavy with incense, where sacred rites are performed by an emaciated priest, who is bowed with sorrow almost to the ground. The whole scene is exquisitely beautiful, but crushing in its sadness. Then, as we close the High

[1] Preface to *Forgiveness and Law* (1874).
[2] *Some Loose Stones* (1913).

Church volume, and open the New Testament, our eyes light upon such words as these: "I write unto you, My little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." We are in the fresh air! We are in the sunshine! We are in the presence of a loving God, of a victorious Saviour! How much better God's sunshine is than the Church's crypt!

The formulation of kindred views by an eminent living German theologian, Haering, has interesting features of its own. First[1] he put forward an interpretation of the atoning work of Christ as an offering of repentance to God supplementing the always imperfect repentance of Christ's people. It appears highly questionable that the Saviour's sacrifice should be described as eking out that of His followers. In any case Haering withdrew the suggestion, and substituted for it the affirmation that Christ's sufferings bring man to repentance. Thus, of Campbell's two positions,[2] one is asserted (in a rather bad shape) in

[1] As summarized by Ritschl or by Franks.

[2] Mr. Ronald Knox, with some encouragement from Dr. Hugh Mackintosh, has tried to shut up Mr. W. H. Moberly to this same "either—or," and then to refute each in turn. That is clever, but is hardly a truth-seeking or truth-finding type of criticism.

Haering's first utterances, and the other in his second and subsequent pronouncements.

Ritschl's third volume (3rd ed.) registers these two pronouncements by Haering, and expresses the opinion that the latter and more considered view does not differ from the Penal Example theory ; and this somewhat ungracious criticism has received the important endorsement of Principal Franks.[1] In Haering's later volumes[2] he names and rebuts Ritschl's criticism, pointing out that Grotianism regards punishment—*some* punishment—as supremely desirable, while the more Christian emphasis for which he stands gives the supreme place to repentance. One of the censures which we ourselves ventured to pass on the Grotian theory was precisely that it aimed at frightening wrong-doers rather than at renewing them to repentance. And we ventured to add that, when Grotius had finished with the subject, justice had disappeared and expediency reigned in its stead. Nor did we think this due to a personal blunder on Grotius' part, but rather to the inevitable development of an illogical and transitional theory.

Accordingly, Haering's later view — given shortly in his pamphlet of 1880, reaffirmed

[1] ii. p. 421 ; referring back to his account of Ritschl's criticisms on Haering, p. 345.

[2] Eng. trans. It is rather strange that this treasure should have escaped Principal Franks' wide-flung net.

and elaborated in his *Dogmatic*—amounts to a theory not of Christ's penitence but of Christ as the only author of penitence in the saved. If he offers a "subjective" theory, it is one based upon the objective fact that Christ suffered to save us; and the theory is impressively worked out. Strong in its possession, Haering dismisses as superfluous not merely the difficult penal doctrine but the vague assertion put forward by respected teachers, that in the cross God "judged" the sin of the world. Haering is determined to be subjective—with the objective basis already noted. Christ's work tells first upon men, creating repentance within them; then secondly it is precious to God because it has these powers. The prophetic stands first; the priestly is accessory, or is revealed to us as involved in the full sweep of Christ's prophetic work. Whether this includes everything may be doubted; and we may feel uncertain whether every link in Haering's own chain of thought is secure; but we can hardly err in regarding this calm and reverent analysis as a notable contribution to the interpretation of Christian faith.

CHAPTER XIII

"Redemption by Sample"

The title of this chapter is a phrase coined by A. B. Bruce in his Cunningham Lectures. To quote from a later utterance by the same writer,[1] it indicates the view "that Christ redeemed not us but His own humanity by the power of the Spirit gaining a victory over the flesh, which was sinful in Him as in us, and by dying on the cross not for our sin, but in condemnation of the sinfulness of His own human nature."

This theory lays special emphasis upon the Pauline doctrine of the σάρξ and upon the mystical chapters Rom. vi.–viii. In modern times the theory includes the assertion, for whose truth such high authorities as Holtzman abroad and Dr. Peake in this country may be cited, that according to St. Paul human flesh as such is inherently sinful, and that the fall of Adam is not the origin but the first manifestation of the evil principle in humanity. That would imply

[1] *Theological Review and Free Church College Quarterly*, vol. ii. p. 261.

a correction alike of traditional orthodoxy and of the older form of the theology of "redemption by sample." Christ did not take to Him—on this modernized theory—fallen nature, but a nature doomed to sin by its creaturely weakness. It is also plain that, even if we ascribed to St. Paul a reading of Atonement based on the sinfulness of Christ's flesh, it could only be for the apostle one facet in the gleaming many-sided jewel of his faith. But it is more accurate to report that, according to St. Paul, flesh is not redeemed in Christ but destroyed or eliminated.

The theory assumes a different shape when it definitely emerges in later times. Its great interest lies in the effort to unify Christian thought. Redemption is due to Christ's holding down the rebellious impulses of the flesh—whether conceived as a fallen nature or as inevitably sinful from the first. The smouldering fire never once burst into flame in Him; therefore He has reconciled human nature to God and made humanity sinless—personally in Himself, potentially in all. While this is ingenious, and has affinities with several modern speculations—while indeed it is a kind of bizarre statement of truths towards which the Christian mind of to-day is reaching forth with profound longing—it involves playing with

edged tools, and shades off historically into fanatical doctrines which debit Christ not merely with original but with actual sin. And, when such doctrines arise, faith in the Atonement disappears. On the other hand, in the genuine theory of "redemption by sample," we have a curious union of the strong assertion of the "sinfulness" of Christ's human nature with the at least equally strong assertion of His personal sinlessness. This is notable in Edward Irving; it is also notable in the learned and ill-starred volume of James Stuart, of which we are to speak presently.

When a *quasi*-Pauline doctrine of Christ's flesh reappeared in the Spanish Churchmen Elipandus and Felix of Urgel, the main interest was apparently Christological. It may be doubted whether, at that stage in the history of Christian thought, we find, or could at all expect to find, original and considered statements on the significance of Christ's death. Still, by general admission, these Spanish writers manifest a strong religious interest—wise or unwise. Their point of departure is the significant Western habit of conceiving Christ as "the man" who saved us. Spanish liturgies made this habit specially conspicuous and lent it new authority; possibly Nestorian influences had in part told upon them.

Theology had often spoken of the man Christ as "assumed" into the Godhead; it seemed no great change—and possibly it was not without precedent—to speak of Christ's humanity as "adopted," and to contrast within the unity of His person the Son of God, enjoying an eternal and inherent Sonship, and the Son of Man, acquiring Sonship as His brethren do by adoption.

Plainly there is a genuine religious interest in asserting the true humanity of Christ. Plainly the Adoptionism[1] of the Spaniards is an attempt to express that interest within the limits of the accepted Christology, to which the Council of Chalcedon had put the last touches. But the attempt was perilous. It was felt to involve a dangerous strain for the orthodox compromise, according to which Christ was to be treated alternately as a man and as God, with a natural if tacit understanding that it was more reverent to dwell upon the divinity than to proclaim overloudly the humanity. In the upshot it appears that Felix, the more important of the two leaders,

[1] This is the historic emergence of the term; also written Adoptianism. Contemporary scholars—Burn in *ERE* makes Harnack personally responsible—have a rather misleading usage, which antedates the term, and applies it to early radical Christologies in which Christ's glory was explained by the exaltation or Divine adoption of the man Jesus.

called forth a reaction which strengthened even in the West the Monophysite tendency of orthodoxy, and which left as one of its legacies the doctrine of Transubstantiation.[1]

Our interest in Spanish Adoptionism depends on what it said about Christ's human nature; in the Hebraizing language of theology, influenced intelligently or unintelligently by St. Paul, about Christ's "flesh." Granted that Christ's humanity and divinity were to be sharply contrasted; granted that the religious interest, for which it is vital that Christ is our true Brother, was to have full expression—or the nearest approach to fullness which the creeds would permit; how far did the Spanish Adoptionists go? Did they explicitly make Christ's flesh sinful? For the most part, though not exclusively, we are dependent for our knowledge of Felix and Elipandus upon those who refuted their doctrines off the face of the earth, or at any rate banished them "furth of the realm" of orthodoxy. Alcuin, one of these triumphant controversialists, tells us[2] that Felix quoted Rom. vi.; that he, Alcuin, does not know what to make of this appeal, and therefore passes on to clearer points. It is tolerably evident what

[1] So Burn in *ERE*. Apparently the transmutation of bread and wine into flesh and blood is thought to imply covert belief in the transmutation of Christ's human nature into Godhead.

[2] *Adv. Felicem*, ii. 13.

had happened. Felix had discovered in the great apostle thoughts which appealed to him, but had not clearly worked out the thesis of "redemption by sample"; else he must have produced greater scandal, and called forth stronger denunciations—as happened afterwards with Edward Irving. So long as he merely affirms with St. Paul that "our old man" is "crucified with Christ," it is difficult to understand the heretic and not very easy to refute him.

There is said to be more evidence of a further startling statement by the Adoptionists. They are supposed to have taught that Christ *qua* man needed not merely the new legal standing bestowed in adoption but new personal capacities imparted by a second birth. Our experts assure us that great weight was laid upon Christ's baptism. But surely we must proceed with caution here! It was not possible for a Catholic theologian, writing centuries after Ephesus and Chalcedon, to attach great dogmatic importance to Christ's baptism by the Forerunner. That would have meant breaking down all the bulwarks of orthodoxy. Alcuin is shocked that Felix should assert Christ's personal need of baptism. Felix's "words plainly show that this was his meaning," cries Alcuin.[1] Any one who is familiar with

[1] *Adv. Felicem*, ii. 16.

theological controversy will be apt rather to conclude that *Alcuin's* words "plainly show" Felix had never spoken out in the sense alleged. It must have needed a process of inference—perhaps fair, perhaps malignant—to make him responsible for what seemed so shocking a doctrine.

A phrase from Felix, preserved by Alcuin, is unfortunately less clear than one could wish. Unfortunately, too, there is admitted corruption in the context. The assertion concerns the man Christ; thought is moving rapidly towards the doctrine of the twofold Sonship. Christ had "two births": one from the Virgin, one by adoption. The second, *initiavit in lavacro a mortuis resurgendo.*[1] Harnack, followed verbatim by Burn, translates or paraphrases "in Christ's spiritual birth—baptism was the beginning; it was not completed till the Resurrection." This is a tolerably expanded rendering. Are we to suppose that words have been lost? Alcuin's comments do not suggest any such inference. May Felix not be appealing again to Rom. vi.—or to Rom. vi. in conjunction with Col. iii.? "Christ had two births: one of the flesh, from the Virgin; one by adoption, from the Resurrection" (Rom. i. 1). "And this better birth He imparts to us at our

[1] *Adv. Felicem*, ii. 17.

baptism." The parallel may halt; but that is nothing unheard of in theology, orthodox or heterodox, or indeed in other human activities. The significance, to Felix or Elipandus, of Christ's baptism must not be overstressed. When a hymn declares of our Lord that

> For us baptized, for us He bore
> His holy fast and hungered sore,

we do not think of charging either author or translator with Adoptionism. Accordingly one inclines to think that—as was antecedently probable—the theology of "redemption by sample" was suggested rather than formulated in the ninth century.

The next names in the list of those who taught the sinfulness of Christ's human nature are Schwenkfeld the Anabaptist, who imputed actual sins to Jesus, and Dippel, the brilliant and erratic pioneer of eighteenth-century Rationalism. These two are mentioned in incidental fashion by Ritschl. But the next serious representative of the doctrine belongs to the early nineteenth century—Menken; and he stands for a Bible-loving Protestantism, though he takes his colour from Pietism rather than from the tradition of the orthodox schools. His short treatise on *The Brazen Serpent* (1812) formulates the assertions of the sinfulness of Christ's humanity, of His personal sinlessness, and of the

significance of the Brazen Serpent of Num. xxi. as an image of *Satan*, who was being put to an open shame. Plainly, the era of scientific and critical Bible study has not yet affected the theory of "redemption by sample." No alliance between scholarship and the theory we are reviewing had as yet come about.

We next turn to our own country. It is curious that an important book by Thomas Erskine of Linlathen[1] bears the same title as Menken's tract, stands for the same twofold doctrine regarding Christ, stands even for the assertion that the Brazen Serpent was a mocking image of Diabolus, and follows closely (1831) upon a second edition of Menken's little book (1829).[2] Was there, then, direct filiation? Or suggestion through oral tradition? Or must the novelist's "long arm of coincidence" be held accountable for all these similarities? Erskine was not the man to borrow largely from any predecessor; still less to borrow without acknowledgment. He was a lay theologian, well equipped with piety, ingenious in mind, but not learned or even bookish. And the appeal to John iii. is classical, not to say commonplace; while the evolution

[1] May one protest against Principal Franks' exaggeration of M'Leod Campbell's supposed dependence on Erskine? They were comrades; not master and pupil.

[2] This date is given by Ritschl.

of thought in the two essays betrays no resemblance at all.

It is not meant to affirm that the whole importance of Erskine's book is summed up in the dogma of the sinfulness of Christ's "flesh." Rather one feels it significant that Erskine stands for the moral and practical interest in character rather than for the old dogmatic concern with escape from punishment or for the profound religious thought of peace with God. But one also finds it significant that, in this admired and influential treatise, Erskine should have felt it necessary to complete his theory of the redemption of character by the assertion that, in order to set us free from the taint of sin, Christ had to assume it.[1]

With much greater confidence than to Menken we must look to Edward Irving as having in-

[1] Principal Franks' well-chosen page references to Erskine's *Brazen Serpent* refer to the first edition. The second edition —same year, 1831—is divided into chapters and not inconsiderably modified, though the leading positions remain. I ought to add that my knowledge of 2nd ed. is derived from the reprint (viz. 3rd ed.) of 1879. This is posthumous; the development of Erskine's thoughts into dogmatic Universalism had led him to distrust his previous findings. Hence he resisted all entreaties for a reprint of the *Brazen Serpent*. But his own hand had struck out certain paragraphs from his own copy; and with these few omissions the issue of 1879 reproduces 2nd ed., and gives us Erskine's theology of Atonement if not in a final form yet as near finality as circumstances permitted.

spired Erskine's views in 1831. Irving was in friendly relations with Erskine's friends—with M'Leod Campbell, with A. J. Scott. The latter indeed, afterwards Principal of Owens College, Manchester, who lost his licence to preach when Campbell was deposed, had been Irving's assistant at the Caledonian Church. In his stormy career Irving had already broached the doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's humanity, coupled with strong assertions of faith in His sinless personality. He had also initiated a scathing criticism of the ruling doctrine of Christ's penal substitutiona—criticism which also appears, though with a half apology, in the Erskine of 1831. Irving smartly if not very sympathetically renounced and denounced what he called "stock-jobbing theology."[1]

Irving stands indeed for the heroic thesis[1] that the assertion of a sinful nature in Christ is the uniform teaching of orthodoxy, Catholic or Reformed. Apparently he relies upon a syllogism. Full true humanity in our "fallen" race includes Original Sin. Orthodoxy stands for Christ's full humanity. *Therefore* orthodoxy stands for His (impersonal; potential; unreal) sinfulness. "To know and to understand how the Son of God took sinful flesh and yet was

[1] Pamphlet of 1830; to this my direct knowledge of Irving is confined.

sinless is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, of orthodox[1] theology." Atonement is at-one-ment, but in the special sense of unifying, in what Bruce would call the "sample" personality, God and Man. The "commandment received" by Christ "from the Father . . . to lay down His life" (John x. 18) stands, according to Irving, for the sentence of death pronounced (Gen. iii. 3, 19) upon all the fallen nature into which Christ had now entered! Both he and Erskine teach that the sinfulness of Christ's "nature" makes His death a thing of justice as no imputation or substitution could ever make it. And yet both of them, when they seek to formulate a higher truth in lieu of the substitutionism of the age, fall back upon a "moral" theory. It is as a great exhibition of love that Christ's suffering is so sacred a thing before God and man. He could and He did stoop so low. In curious contrast with this touch of modernism, we find Irving still glorying in the Calvinistic doctrine of Election. M'Leod Campbell could already have taught him better.

We observe another notable feature in Irving's theology which I believe to be strange to Menken and which certainly is strange to Erskine—the Sacramental strain. One has been tempted to describe Irvingism as a new

[1] Pamphlet of 1830.

Montanism, and to marvel how rapidly it swung round into a new Sacerdotalism. But it appears that, before even the Tongues spread from the West of Scotland into the heart of London, and long before prophecy had taken imperious command of the movement started by Irving's erratic genius, he had himself published sacramentalist views at least regarding baptism. It would be interesting to decide whether this is a natural development of the theology of "redemption by sample," or whether its connexion with that system is an historical accident. We shall find the same combination of views in our last name—Dr. Du Bose. To say the least, it is plain that a doctrine which makes the life and work of Christ alter the constitution of human nature *as a nature* is in danger of making the link between Saviour and saved sacramental rather than spiritual.

The next name on the list is of interest to the present writer, who saw poor James Stuart fighting for his theological existence in the Free Church of Scotland General Assembly, and meeting with as short a shrift as Irving. Stuart's *Principles of Christianity* stand for the union of the theology of "redemption by sample" with modern critical study of the New Testament. On this slightly modified basis we encounter once more the familiar pair of assertions—the

sinful nature, the sinless personality. While considerable attention is paid to the Epistle to the Hebrews, the central appeal is to those passages of Romans which seem to have applied hints to Felix of Urgel. Stuart had rather invited disaster by his manner. His opening sentence told his astonished Church that his inquiry was destined to "eliminate the conception of imputation from theology," while his last sentence recognized omissions in his work, but explained that "something must be left for future research."

It is necessary to note the existence of a curious passage in Moberly's *Atonement and Personality*[1] which brings him very near the position of those who teach "Redemption by Sample," and chimes in with other resemblances between his views and those of Dr. Du Bose. Both are sacramentalists. Both assign to renewal the leading place in their systems. And, as we now observe, both have a severe theology of the body or the flesh of Christ. According to Moberly, since the human body is, even for our Lord Himself, "the channel of temptation," there appears to be a moral necessity, even apart from other grounds, why that sacred body should be done to death by torture. This passage does not of course avail

[1] Ch. vi. p. 113.

to place Moberly among the adherents of the scheme which we are at present considering. Probably he would have shrunk in horror from imputing a sinful humanity to Christ. But the analogy is plain and even close. We have seen how Moberly, not we thought very reasonably, challenges part of Dale's doctrine as being out of keeping with the rest. Does not Moberly lay himself fully open to a similar censure by so menacing an explanation of the sufferings of Christ? It is an unnecessary and painful supplement to his other views; but it and they are alike strangely gloomy. The new life, whether in the disciple or in the master, is for Moberly a thing heavy with shadows. In this special paragraph he appears almost Manichæan.

Lastly, we have a graceful and widely popular statement of views plainly marked with the wonted ideas of Redemption by Sample in an American Episcopal scholar, Dr. Porcher du Bose. The doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's human nature is very lightly touched: "it would never have occurred" to this theologian "to say that our Lord in assuming our fallen nature took sin" had not the Scriptures "in their fearlessness" implied that language.[1] It is hardly

[1] Dykes' review in the *Critical* for January 1893 of *The Soteriology of the New Testament*—a book difficult to obtain. The reviewer quotes these words from "pp. 232–3."

necessary to add that the author repeats the wonted assurance of personal faith in Christ's sinlessness. An interesting review in the *Critical* (of the volume already quoted) by the late Principal Dykes of the English Presbyterian College correctly describes it as "reviving the theology of Menken," and expresses the belief that only the author's general Christological orthodoxy prevents his doctrine from collapsing into denial of Atonement. The review also notes, apparently with some surprise, the author's strong sacramentalism. In later volumes Dr. Du Bose pursues his way through section after section of the New Testament, arguing that his theory is the uniform, the exclusive, the divinely given message regarding the mystery of our salvation. He commended himself greatly to the generous advocacy of Dr. Sanday, who, however, praises him rather as a "philosopher" than as a scholar. It is worth noting that Moberly's gloom seems absent from the kindred theories of his fellow-countryman in the Western world.

With much of the *effort* of this strange theory we have already expressed sympathy. Its interest in character, if perhaps unbalanced, is genuinely Christian. Its belief that Christ and His sufferings are the immediate and not merely the remote cause of human renewal may be

warmly welcomed. Its effort to work with a single central conception is all to the good. It furnishes for us moderns a restatement, in would-be ethical terms, of the mystical thesis of the early Eastern Church—Christ became what we are that we might become what He is. Nevertheless, the theory seems wholly to miscarry. And our closing remarks regarding it can assume hardly any form but that of reasons for dissent.

Firstly: the instinctive shrinking of the Christian mind from connecting sin with the nature of Christ is irrepressible and ought not to be suppressed. "Christ became what we are"; is it in any rational sense of the words thinkable that, in order to redeem from sin, He became sinful? Or, if we do not mean it, why say it?

Secondly: the theory depends upon an antique or scholastic separation of human nature from human personality. Sometimes, *e.g.* in Erskine, much play is made with the alleged impersonality[1] of Christ's humanity. It is true that human conduct is no mere sequence of isolated acts; but a "nature" which never once results in act is a figment—a "metaphysical figment" in the worst sense of the

[1] Orthodoxy prefers to speak of the Enhypostasy—*sc.* in the Divine—rather than of the Anhypostasy of the humanity of Christ; a distinction in words corresponding to the smallest possible difference in thought.

expression. Those Christians who choose to play with such fancies may do so innocently, if not wisely; but to make the defence of our faith turn upon such splitting of hairs is a thing of ill omen.

Thirdly: the idea that the *nature* is henceforward redeemed, independently of the redemption of the persons clothed in the common human nature, is at the best dubious. One has no wish to conceive personality as purely atomistic. We are "members one of another"; and Christ is our Head. But real redemption must be stated in ethical terms, such as faith, repentance, love. When these begin, the experience of the Christian may or must go on to include profound reinforcements of power. That is the central faith to-day of many Christians. But the key remains in the hands of faith—conscious or half conscious, mighty or feeble—though along with faith there will be conscious surrender of will to the holiness and grace of God in Christ. That we are saved, independently of faith, by a change in the substance of human nature—a change perhaps operating mainly through material sacraments—the assertion will not long be possible for any sincere modern mind, and never was at the heart of it Christian.

Yet we may perhaps end with a single

concession. One of Bruce's main reasons for rejecting "Redemption by Sample" is that it necessarily makes "every man his own saviour." I am not convinced that that criticism is just. We are told that Christ has "potentially" saved "the race" — not actually; whether in the case of all (dogmatic Universalism), or in the case of some arbitrarily elected ones (Augustinianism and Calvinism), or in the case of those who yield to the offered mercy (Evangelicalism). Need we infer that actual redemption is to be our one achievement? "If the first-fruits are holy the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy so are the branches" — that is the theology of the "Sample." By leaving the participation of individuals undetermined, this theology in its better form guards against antinomianism; by pledging divine power in Christ crucified and risen, it points us away from ourselves to the grace of God. If in other respects this theology appeared sound, one could not follow Bruce in condemning it at this point. No one who has sympathy with idealist positions in philosophy will consent to so hasty a verdict. It is not well even to reject error for wrong reasons. If we do so, we may be hampering ourselves in the statement and defence of truth.

CHAPTER XIV

Some Minor Theories of Atonement

Most of the theories which we collect for short treatment here are minor in the sense of being subordinate in importance. At their best they present brilliant flashes of insight. In other cases they may be tempting and plausible, but appear on closer inspection unsound. None of them rivals the more massive and systematic statements with which we have been dealing—unless indeed Ritschl's. We place his views in this chapter because they are so entirely unsatisfying considered as a doctrine regarding the death of Christ. In themselves they are indeed massive and learned; and they are offered to us as the last word in the long development of Christian thought upon the subject of the Atonement. Ritschl retains the Biblical phrases, but empties them of meaning. What ought to be his central achievement is the weakest part of his theology.

I

We begin with a suggestion which, so far as the present writer knows, is first formulated by Horace Bushnell in *The Vicarious Sacrifice* (1866), that the suffering of Christ is the earthly counterpart and manifestation of age-long suffering caused by human sin to a God of love. The view is adopted among others by W. N. Clarke. Recently it has been stated with much learning and warm piety by Professor David Smith. We may distinguish different elements or stages in the doctrine.

(1) First of all there is the "Patripassian" affirmation that God can feel. But in using this term, as in the kindred instance of "Adoptionism," we run into ambiguity. Historic Patripassianism seeks to find not merely the fullness of the Godhead but exclusive Deity in the man Christ Jesus. It has its main modern representative in Swedenborgianism. We impute nothing of this to Bushnell. He is challenging — perhaps for the first time among theologians of the foremost rank, at least in our English language—the traditional view which makes God literally "without passions" as well as "without parts." In psychology, *feeling* had a severe struggle for recognition. No element was so slow in

establishing its claim to be investigated. The assumption long remained unchallenged, that feeling was an infection of the mind by bodily influences, and therefore was discredible in man and unthinkable in God. But, whatever the bodily relations of human feeling, we cannot hold to-day that the body as such is in any sense discreditable to the human mind. And, in our tentative efforts to explain the life of God by human analogies, we must recognize something that corresponds to feeling as well as to thought and to will. God's reason is the sun at which our own tapers are kindled. His will is around us, and is within us written on our hearts; and we worship it. So also the noblest human feeling must point us to its source in God our Father, the God of love. A deity of stoical apathy is not the God whom Christ reveals.[1]

So far we are fully and cordially in agreement with Bushnell.

(2) The second stage is to place suffering *qua* suffering in the psychosis of God Himself. Others—copying too closely, their critics may think, philosophers of the Absolute—will discern in God a feeling-tone of blessedness in spite of elements of pain, since these are

[1] Irving's pamphlet already quoted reiterates the traditional view of Divine insensibility.

"swallowed up in victory." We believe that the criticism fails and that the assertion of God's happiness is a true part of our faith. Knowing the end from the beginning—seeing and feeling the whole as a whole—being in His inmost and deepest self the God of redemption—God possesses without effort or struggle the assurance that grace shall reign and that love must conquer. Therefore, in His calm vision of the unfolding ages, He must be happy indeed. An unhappy God would mean a bankrupt universe, a demonstrated pessimism, a doomed faith.

Against all this Bushnell and his friends would assert the presence of sorrow *qua* sorrow in the very life of God. Elsewhere, it is true, he affirms the *happiness* of God; but this merely reminds us that in Bushnell we have a rhetorician, though a lofty and noble rhetorician, rather than a thinker. His main view is the assertion of Divine suffering. He is in search of moral normality in the sufferings of Christ; as he rather oddly asserts it—rhetoric again!—there is "nothing superlative" in these sufferings since they are in line with those of good men, of holy angels, of the Eternal Father Himself. Granted that that were fully true, would not the word "superlative" still be justified? Would not the appeal force itself on

us anew: "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow"? Is not "superlative" the least title that any Christian can apply to the pain and to the love of his Saviour?

This may be a verbal criticism. The issues of thought are weightier; and we are here at the very centre of Bushnell's thinking. As we have said, he is seeking to trace moral normality in the sacrificial experience of our Lord. On several grounds he rejects the current penal view. It was morally normal that guilt should involve suffering; it was ingeniously and felicitously exceptional that, for this once, the suffering involved in human guilt should be endured by Divine innocence; but moral normality persists—there is still suffering as the due fruit of sin, though it was never earned by the Substitute. We may agree with Bushnell in desiring to find a much higher normality than this in the workings of Divine love. But we hesitate to adopt his line of escape. We dare not impute suffering as suffering to the Most High. A God who fluctuates with changing circumstances, physical or human, is a Pagan god; and in the end that turns out to mean, No God at all.

Difficult as it is to construe Christology in better terms than those of the now anachronous

creeds, may we not trace part of the significance of the incarnation of God in Christ just here, that Divine love now knew suffering as suffering? And so the love that emptied itself in the act of redemption is the greatest and divinest of all.

(3) Thirdly, Bushnell and his followers tend to transfer Atonement from the cross of Calvary to the throne of Heaven. Sin was eternally made good by the sufferings which the loving heart of God endured.

But is not this one more way to make the cross of Christ of none effect? Not to age-long pain in heaven, but to one sharp immeasurable sacrifice of sorrow upon earth, we owe our deliverance in the blood of Christ. We were and are redeemed by Him who died for us, to the glory of God the Father.

However well meant and however attractive, Bushnell's brilliant sally turns out to be no better than a new Gnosticism, turning the sacred realities of redeeming history into pale images of something transcendent. In relief at discovering a God who can feel, many minds fail to weigh the danger of losing a Christ who saves. But to lose Christ is to lose everything. In this was manifested the love of God—He sent His only begotten Son *into the world* that we might live through Him.

II

Bushnell failed to satisfy himself; partly on the ground of other elements in his early volume with which we cannot here deal. In the issue he tried to remodel his views in a volume called *Forgiveness and Law* (1874), which he requested all students of his theology to substitute for the second half of the *Vicarious Sacrifice*. The same effort is discernible as in the earlier volume. Bushnell still desires to trace moral normality in that Divine suffering which redeems. One may add that his new statement enables him to do greater justice to the earthly life and death of Christ as the means of human redemption. But the clue now offered us seems open to at least as many objections as the earlier hypothesis.

This is the new suggestion. We ourselves find it easier to forgive when we have been "at cost" on behalf of those who wronged us. God therefore—if we may dare the paraphrase—worked Himself into a forgiving disposition by the mission of Christ and by His share in Christ's sufferings. No wonder if Principal Franks finds this view too "anthropomorphic." It is indeed inevitable that human thought should anthropomorphize, but hardly in the way of imputing our weakest weaknesses to the God

of glory. Hence we conclude, in agreement with Mr. Mozley and with Principal Franks, that Bushnell's second thoughts upon Atonement are no improvement; rather, if anything, a retrogression.

A similar formula to Bushnell's later suggestion is challenged by Ritschl in the German Hofmann (of Erlangen). Ritschl traces it back to a seventeenth-century hymn, the work of one Justus Gesenius. Characteristically Ritschl pronounces that what may pass muster in a hymn need not be at all suitable for a theological treatise. In this case, Ritschl prohibits the assertion that God or that Christ has been "at cost" to save us. But that is a position much more normally Christian than Bushnell's strange theory. It goes back to Christ's own Ransom doctrine.

III

In some *Expositor* articles[1] the late Dr. Fairbairn once tried to grapple with the problem of Christ's terrible sufferings in the Garden as well as on the Cross. Working on the lines of the theory of Christ's redeeming penitence—for which, as we have noted, it is

[1] For October and December 1896; they are included in the *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*.

vital that Christ should realize in His developing human consciousness the whole blackness of sin—Dr. Fairbairn suggests, as the bitterest drop in Christ's cup, the perception that where grace abounded sin did more and more abound. The supreme manifestation of Divine and redeeming love occasioned the supreme exhibition of the malignity of sin. And this consciousness, it is held, broke Christ's heart. But surely this is to invert the true order! "Victory remains with *love*." There is a well-known German picture of Christ in Gethsemane. The figure is superficially graceful and attractive; but, as one continues to look at it, the conviction grows: "That well-meaning sentimentalist would never have redeemed the world." Dr. Fairbairn also sentimentalizes. He asks us to accept a Christ whose fine sensibilities made Him their victim. Prophecy spoke in different terms: "I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." The great Fulfiller, after He had "set His face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem," was little likely to blench or wince in the presence of the inevitable, had there been nothing more to crush His spirit than Fairbairn discovers. A theology which can satisfy itself on such terms falls very far short of reaching the heart of the mystery of redemption.

IV

Principal Franks has made a special place for some sermons by Bishop Westcott (1888) in which, drawing upon the Epistle to the Hebrews, the preacher seeks to explain Christ's human experience as His own progressive training in the life of holiness and love. On this view the sacrifice of the Cross is not merely the severest test but the means of the highest personal divine-human goodness. Something similar, if less distinct, is recognized by Franks in Rothe; one might add that the fertile mind of Bushnell (in the *Vicarious Sacrifice*) includes this among other views of the great truth. M'Leod Campbell also touches on it in passing; and again Moberly does so.

One inclines to hold that some such thought must enter into any construction of Atonement which is to satisfy the Christian heart and conscience.

V

We are now to say a little regarding Ritschl's contribution. In seeking to understand Bushnell, we were led to accept as our clue the question, How can the suffering of love in Christ our Redeemer be shown to be morally normal? In studying Ritschl we must turn back

to what has been our habitual if not quite invariable clue, viz., the question, When do we discover moral necessity? Denney has remarked with natural surprise on the wide scope allowed to a sort of ethico-speculative interest by Ritschl, jealous as he is of theological surplusage. He works with (A) "Definitions," (B) "Presuppositions," and (C) "Proof." The central thought is the moral necessity not of the redemption of character, nor yet of Atonement as the power and potency either of such redemption or of forgiveness, but of *forgiveness itself*. To erect His kingdom upon earth, God must work in and through men; faulty men, deserving of punishment—if Ritschl will allow us to say so—and in need of being forgiven. It is almost a tautology to say that, if they are to be in communion with God, they must have received forgiveness. That they have not reached the extreme limit of wickedness in rejecting God's mercy is moral warrant for such forgiveness. Their sin is not at the worst stage. It is pardonable. God sees a prospect of making something out of those whom He receives into His saving fellowship; this fact in a sense demands that He should forgive them. Further, they are not forgiven as mere individuals; they are forgiven in their place within that fellowship of the reconciled which

for religious ends constitutes the Christian Church and, when ethically organized, is termed the kingdom of God.

These two principles are Ritschl's positive contributions to a theology of Atonement—the doctrine of two stages in sin, and the doctrine of the community. Christ appeals in God's name to all who are capable of salvation. He also founds the Church and establishes the kingdom of God. In no other sense does Christ appear to rank as a saviour from sin. His death is *called* a sin-offering—but on Ritschl's lips what does that mean? It is a mechanical piece of antiquarianism.

One must guard oneself against misapprehension. Little as Ritschl's singularly conditioned system may tell us of salvation verifiably imparted by the grace of Christ, he believes in the grace of God as the source of human rescue. Hence those passages in his historical volume which trace the evangelical principle through the Middle Ages—notably through Bernard—and which lead one to expect something far more positive and more satisfying than the systematic volume anywhere exhibits. Ritschl is no Rationalist. He does not believe in salvation by our own goodness, but by the mercy of God. Only—that mercy operates in creating the Church and in

giving us a second chance; but thereafter it stops.

Again, Ritschl is not un-Christian but nobly Christian when he goes to Christ for the certainty of God and of God's forgiving love. By this steady affirmation—"None knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him"—Ritschl takes his stand with those who join in the great confession that Christ is necessary and that He is sufficient. It is sad to hear orthodox Christians denouncing such views on Ritschl's part, and joining in unholy alliance with his rationalistic or even non-Christian critics. But the doctrine of Atonement reposes upon the principle just mentioned, being indeed a restatement—a narrower application—an intenser and profounder apprehension—of the same fundamental truth. It tells us that Christ's *death* is necessary for our redemption, and that His *death* is sufficient. Dale and others have taught us well that confession of this theology of Atonement is not a pre-requisite of salvation. God is no jealous precisian. When He sees faith like a grain of mustard seed, He acknowledges it and honours it and crowns it with His blessing. But the fact of Christ's death remains. It is a challenge to every human mind, and still more plainly to the

mind of every Christian. What does that death upon the cross mean? Till we have found a moral necessity for the supreme fact of all history, we cannot claim to have uttered a full-orbed Christian confession. And one mourns in Albrecht Ritschl that, while he lived thankfully by the revelation of Christ, he discovered no reason beyond the mere "testing" of His "fidelity to His vocation" why Christ should die.

CHAPTER XV

Personal Relationships and the Divine Anger

This might have been enrolled among our minor theories had it not seemed to demand rather fuller treatment. We are to say something about views expressed by A. B. Bruce (in the *Humiliation of Christ*), by D. W. Simon (in *The Redemption of Man* and in *Reconciliation by Incarnation*), by M'Leod Campbell in his well-known monograph, and—in a different fashion—by Albrecht Ritschl (in a Latin programme *De Ira Dei*, and in his systematic volume).

The conception of literal propitiation of a literally angry God is part of the great Protestant tradition. I am not in a position to quote proofs of this from any of the classical Protestant systems, though I doubt not that such could be produced; but I may refer to the summary in the Westminster Assembly's *Shorter Catechism*, which is an admirable compend of the working doctrines of Calvinism

during its vitality, and is the statement to which Bruce makes reference in his phase as a defender of the old faith. For, while it is possible to hold that punishment and also Atonement might be interpreted *either* by the requirements of an inexorable law *or* by the movements of personal anger in God, the Shorter Catechism includes both assertions. Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice "to satisfy Divine justice and to reconcile us to God." But, also, among the ingredients in Christ's cup of humiliation is included "the wrath of God" as well as "the miseries of this life" and "the accursed death of the cross."

The affirmation of Divine anger towards the Sin-Bearer has been largely associated with those tremendous disturbances of soul which Christ exhibited as death drew near Him. It has been inferred that there was a special outpouring of God's anger upon Him at the last, and that He shrank in terror from what He foresaw. We ought to make it clear that Bruce's orthodoxy was seeking to soften the impact on the modern Christian heart of the assertion of God's anger with Christ by denying any *special* anger during the last hours of suffering. As the sinner's representative, Jesus is said to have been enduring Divine anger all His days. Surely this is a strange way of

escape! We are not to affirm one short if terrible agony appointed for the Son of God by the Father's indignation against evil. Rather, the experience was lifelong. During His untroubled childhood, during that blameless youth which "grew in favour with God," during His unwearied ministries of love and mercy, God was steadily angry with Him *qua* substitute. Probably the "anger" spoken of has a highly technical quality. Perhaps it is even *theologoumenon et præterea nihil.* Concurrently with this theological displeasure, we are to believe with all Christians that the love of the Father rested upon Christ and that His peace filled the heart of the Son. Yet, when all is said, it is strange that an eminent theologian late in the nineteenth century should be found defending such views, and passing strange that the theologian doing so should be Alexander Balmain Bruce. This strain of teaching marks the extreme point towards orthodoxy, if not towards reaction, in a somewhat varied theological development. Not in any such fashion are we likely to plead with success the cause of Christian faith at the present day or in the future.

When we turn to M'Leod Campbell, we pass into a region where the penal doctrine

of Atonement, still championed by Bruce in the *Humiliation*, has been set aside. It somewhat startles us when we seem to observe that the companion theory included in the orthodox tradition survives. Campbell still seems to hold that the anger of God was felt by Christ; and he seems to affirm that, on the completion of Christ's sacrifice, the Divine anger against sin passed away. There is no indication in Campbell of a disposition to make the endurance of the Divine anger—or, to make Christ's response thereto—cover the whole of our Lord's earthly life. As little perhaps could we quote an explicit affirmation of a contrast between the atmosphere of Christ's life and that of His dying hours. What is to be affirmed is that Campbell yields to the impression made by the Gospel narratives, and recognizes a concentration of sufferings, spiritual as well as physical, in Christ's Passion. Among the elements of suffering he names the anger of God. We must quote at least part of a sentence verbatim. Christ in responding to God's judgment on sin "is necessarily receiving the full apprehension and realization of that wrath, as well as of that sin against which it comes forth, into His soul and spirit, into the bosom of the divine humanity, and, so receiving it, He responds to it with a perfect response—or re-

sponse from the depths of that divine humanity —and *in that perfect response He absorbs it.*"[1]

The italics are due to Campbell himself. They help to make his declaration doubly solemn, and doubly strange. The assertion contained in this sentence is not borrowed from any Scripture, and it is accompanied by no words of explanation. Perhaps in the end it is simply a reaffirmation of Campbell's central thesis, that Christ presented to God a sacrifice of repentance on account of human sin, and a "vicarious confession." Convinced that God was righteously angry with sin, Campbell felt that real repentance must include an admission on man's part that sin deserves misery and that God's condemning sentence is just. He does not seem really to hold that God was angry with Christ any more than he holds that God punished Christ. Rather, in the last dread vision of sin, there is also for Christ a new vision of God's anger with sin, and a heart-breaking sense that Christ's human brethren have righteously deserved it.

Does this reading of Campbell's thought do justice to the declaration that Christ's confession of our sin "absorbs" the Divine anger? Obscure as that affirmation is, it seems best understood as follows: After full and sorrowful

[1] *Nature of the Atonement*, ch. vi. p. 117, 5th ed.

admission of man's guilt and ill-desert has been presented to God in human nature, God's righteous anger can persist no longer. If this is Campbell's meaning, the strangest of all the components of his strange formula is precisely a reiteration of the doctrine of vicarious penitence.

This, we think it probable, is what Campbell means to convey. In any case, he can hardly mean precisely what he says. Is it the case that God was angry with mankind up to the hour of Christ's last sufferings? Is it the case that, from that hour forward, God's anger against human sin disappeared? Did Campbell at all mean that? One can believe that there is no Divine anger towards those who are in Christ Jesus, who share His confession and learn of Him in all things. But the existence and then the total disappearance of Divine anger against sin is not rationally or morally credible. Nor indeed, one thinks, is the endurance of God's anger by Christ credible; certainly it is not more credible than the endurance of punishment. Campbell has been criticized, not without reason, for allowing too little of genuine anguish in the mind of the crucified Christ, and for explaining away the Cry of Desertion, though accepting it as a true record. In the present connexion Campbell's language, as distinguished from his thought,

seems to exaggerate his affinities with orthodoxy. Can he truly mean that God's anger was concentrated on Christ? Or that Christ's suffering confession of sin made that anger cease?

Yet another formula is employed by Campbell in which he seems to break with his own doctrine and go over to the penal view. He adopts the Pauline affirmation, that death is the (literal) wages of sin. Being what he was, Campbell could do nothing else. Probably he concealed from his own mind the penal significance of that phrase. To-day one who, while reverencing the great apostle, cannot join in recognizing penal sufferings in Christ, must ask whether such language is ultimate truth or rather is parable, metaphor, symbol.

If we could conceive of Campbell's language[1] about the outpouring of Divine anger at the Crucifixion and its sudden cessation thereafter being taken quite literally, we should read very nearly the central teaching of the late Dr.

[1] One way of interpreting "vicarious confession" would be that Christ, under the first strokes of God's avenging rod, confessed the justice of the Divine punishment of sin. This must give a different colour to the whole scheme, and bring back Campbell's views within the limits of penal orthodoxy. But this, we are convinced, was not his meaning. I owe this suggestion of a possible doctrine to a conversation thirty years since with the Rev. Alexander Martin, now Dr. Martin, Principal of the New College, Edinburgh.

D. W. Simon. Like Campbell, Simon rejected penal conceptions. He made use of a remarkably telling generalization when he bracketed the theory of redemption from the devil, the penal theory, and R. W. Dale's modified recognition of the latter in his doctrine of "an eternal law of righteousness" as being all of them "crypto-dualistic." But, far more definitely than in Campbell's thinking, the doctrine of Divine anger remained with Simon as the true philosophy of Atonement, in contrast with all doctrines of transferred punishment and with all assertions of the demands of law. Not the abstraction "law" but the personal reality "God" is vital. It is with Him we have to do. Atonement as punishment and atonement as the work of Divine anger cease to be viewed as complementary truths. They are definitely treated as alternatives.

Simon's theology of Atonement was not confined to this affirmation. The plan of this book here again may involve danger of injustice, by concentrating attention too narrowly upon one outstanding feature in a many-sided system. Simon himself defines atonement as "adjustment" or "rectification" of "personal relations" between God and man. Not God's anger but personality as such he regards as his keynote —personality in man, but still more in God.

Verbally this formulation of the problem may recall to us Anselm's treatment; and yet perhaps the resemblance is no more than verbal. The petrified Divine honour in which Anselm believes is as far as possible removed from the manifestation of moral character. We may add that Dr. Simon would not admit the affinity. He conceives—by general admission, misconceives—Anselm as supremely interested in the well-being of the Universe; and as thus in a sense anticipating Grotius. This is to attach too much weight to Anselm's merely formal disclaimers of the possibility of God's suffering any real injury from sin. For all practical purposes, the poles of Anselm's thinking are *first*, the injury done by sin to God, and *secondly*, the reparation and more than reparation made by Christ's death, whether that death be termed satisfactory or meritorious. And what Simon affirms is precisely what Anselm wishes to exclude—real and literal injury inflicted on God by His creature.

The appeal to personality may more justly recall to us R. C. Moberly. On one side of it, Moberly's emphasis on personality stands for a serious effort to ethicize the doctrine of Atonement. This we have already described as the better side of Moberly's theory of personality. The other side—the *quasi*-metaphysical doctrine

that all personalities are leaky, or interpenetrate each other—finds no echo in Simon. The latter is a philosophical Realist.

Another writer with whom Simon should be compared rather for contrast than for parallel is Dale. The duel between these two eminent Congregationalists is of much interest. Though, if one were forced to make a choice, one may frankly admit an inclination to vote with Dale, yet one inclines to hold that the truth is divided between them. Both controversialists were men of strong faith. Both were men of power. Simon, a man of unusual learning, was probably the superior in that regard. In the matter of style there is no comparison. Dale at his best is a brilliant master of English. Simon, on the contrary, is a shirt-sleeved and carpet-slippered philosopher. Perhaps like others he derived from Germany a preference for shapelessness over that formal neatness which so often accompanies shallow thinking. But good style need not imply slack thought, and it is a great pity when form and substance are badly matched.

Dale stands for an "eternal law," and in human life for the ethic of principle. Simon stands for the living utterance of personality, and in human life for good impulses. He reminds us that not to destroy but to renew

and transform impulse is God's method in the Gospel. Yet assuredly Christian impulses must live and act upon a basis of principle. They cannot thrive in its absence. Simon seeks to cure the faults of Dale's statement by substituting for the recognition of principle in God the changing movements of a realistically conceived Divine personality, nature, character, or will. One thinks he might have done better by challenging the philosophy according to which legal justice is the highest moral category, and by seeking to translate what he—quite correctly, as one thinks—characterizes as *personal behaviour* into terms of a higher goodness. Fatherliness of love includes—so to say, in solution—the righteousness of the law, but goes beyond it.

If Simon complains that Dale, at least in his earlier and possibly franker utterances, is "crypto-dualistic," making God merely first among the subjects of His own law, as if that law were a strange power which imposed its terms even upon Him, Dale has to pillory Simon, side by side with Mansel, as denying eternal and immutable morality. In Simon's case, there is an effort to defend the paradox that moral law only comes into being with the creation of moral personalities who are to be its subjects, and would cease if they were

annihilated. This is more like a dialectician's quibble than like the utterance of deep conviction. Mansel's zeal for suppressing heterodoxy led him into downright moral scepticism. All possible moral objections to Christian doctrine were discredited — and all moral arguments in its favour, and all its moral appeal! When Simon adopted Mansel's forms of expression, he got himself, to say the least, into very questionable company.

So much regarding Simon's ethic. It is actuated by honourable Christian motives, and by a worthy desire to rise above legalism; but it is distorted, as one must judge, by his realistic philosophy. There is doubtless room for the realistic as well as for the idealistic temperament in the service of the kingdom of God and in the exposition of Christian truth. But we will not accept bondage to either. And, when one philosophy or the other sets aside definite Christian and ethical interests, Christians must challenge it. In addition to what we must consider questionable ethic in Simon, he surpasses Bushnell and Bushnell's followers in anthropomorphism. God seems to become part of the Cosmos. God Himself has a history. He was personally worse off because of sin. The personal disturbance revealed in His anger was met and "propitiated" by the sufferings of

Christ. The personal relations by which Simon seeks to explain the mystery of Atonement have their own character of necessity for his thought. They are necessary biological effects, partly in the Divine and partly in the human constitution. But is such biological theology worthy of its theme? And is an inevitable effect the same thing as a true ethical necessity?

As an idealist position, which has a strong claim to stand for a definitely Christian content, we may quote the view—exaggerated and distorted in theories of "redemption by sample"—that what befalls the Head must be repeated subsequently in the Members. It is instructive to note what approaches towards this are admissible in the realistic thought of Dr. Simon. At one time he quotes, in regard to the mystery of our redemption, the almost slangy phrase, "C'est le premier pas qui coûte." This apparently means that, while there is a heavier burden borne by the Divine Pioneer than by His followers, both experiences alike are parts of one cognate process. Again, Simon urges that we must not discuss the question of incorporation in Christ of a sinner formerly out of Him; that all human beings live and move and act in dependence on the "Logos"; and that only wilful ungodliness can bring to an end that life-giving if incomplete relationship. However

one's sympathy may move towards this more generous estimate of the relation of God to sinful human souls, we have to be resolutely on our guard against substituting conjectures regarding the Logos for truths regarding salvation by Jesus Christ.

It seems well to add a few words dealing with Ritschl's views of the Divine anger; although with him there is assuredly no effort to indicate the doctrine or to give it new scope. He accepts the doctrine as Biblical—as characteristic of the Old Testament and in different fashion of the New. But he asks us to endorse the view that it has entirely lost meaning for the modern Christian mind.

In the Old Testament sudden calamity is attributed to the immediate action of God; and this interpretation is regarded as the basis of the doctrine of His wrath. Calamities are due to fits of Divine rage—Yahweh's rage perhaps in one passage, say recent commentators, the rage of Chemosh the God of Moab. In the New Testament Ritschl insists—though he has to do some characteristic violence to the evidence—that the conception has become exclusively eschatological—it is doubtless mainly so—and that "wrath" has merged in "the wrath to come" or in "the day of wrath." He goes on

to contend that one can put no positive meaning into such a thought. Divine "wrath" has lost its nature-basis, and therefore no longer has touch with reality. Christ's own teaching will not allow us to interpret calamity as necessarily penal. Hence the doctrine can mean nothing. Once again, as I have elsewhere written in a different connexion, Ritschl "with immense learning unveils the shrine; and it is empty."

The ground for this extremely radical handling of the doctrine of Divine wrath is Ritschl's denial of the existence of penal justice. One who holds that sin deserves punishment may find it an intelligible usage to speak of God as punishing not with the inhuman coldness of a machine but with the warmth of personal indignation. Our God is one who is capable of being offended; for that very reason He is one who can and will forgive. The absence of such thoughts explains why Ritschl, who had been moving straight towards a doctrine of punishment by annihilation, arrests himself midway and leaves the issue undecided between the two "Biblical forms of expression" which speak of "eternal suffering" and again of "destruction." Plainly, a final destruction is the implicate of his own thought. But the question has lost interest for him. It has to do with punishment announced as righteous. And Ritschl's entire

concern is with the erection of a community which will respond to God's mind and will share in the fulfilment of His purpose. The rest of mankind are not so much God's enemies as His failures. They are not even to be punished, but "cast as rubbish to the void."

It is one thing to say that punitive justice is far from being the master attribute in God, or the supreme revelation—or even to say that it persists unchanged in our thoughts of God when we have risen to the conception of Fatherly redeeming love. It is another thing, and a very grave one, to say that punitive justice corresponds to nothing at all in God's character and therefore has no place in His universe. Present-day politics, theology, and even religion are being corrupted and degraded by this strong delusion. In human life, it is right that we should be moved to anger by great wickedness. If we hear of such things with unmoved composure, it will be sin in God's sight.

How far is this moral judgment applicable to God Himself? I can only record the impression that we dare not treat the doctrine of Divine anger as literal or scientific truth. Emotional disturbance seems to be a thing which we cannot impute to the clear vision of the All-knowing and All-good. But it will remain symbolically

true. It will suggest elements in our thought of God which we must never lay aside. There will be that in His perfect nature which corresponds to the imperfect yet real Godlikeness of a good man, whose conscience is stirred to anger in the presence of hatred or cruelty or lust.

Another question is raised for us by Ritschl's favourite doctrine of stages in sin. Can we to-day continue St. Paul's generalizing treatment, which has dominated theology hitherto? Are we prepared to say that God is "angry" with every child whose opening half-responsible life shows the taint of evil; or even with every adult offender? The alternative view would be the suggestion which emerges from Ritschl's study of the subject, though (as we have seen) he has too little belief in punishment or in righteous anger against sin to maintain the suggestion personally—Divine anger waits with its tremendous impact upon the deliberate preference of evil and the deliberate rejection of the love that saves. On this view, the Atonement of Jesus Christ would rather avert the origin of Divine "anger" in the case of the redeemed than secure their redemption by "absorbing" God's anger.

We must be content to leave our last question unanswered. It is true that sinful weakness

and sinful obduracy are very different things; yet both are sins; and there is no act of sin so isolated from fellowship with graver forms of evil that it could be forgiven and eradicated without reference to them. The grace of God in Christ which avails for the "least" guilty is able to blot out the most scarlet and crimson of sins. And, whatever is true, it would be the darkest of delusions to hold that there is nothing deadly in sin or that there is nothing formidable in God.

CHAPTER XVI

Denney and the Problem of Christ's Physical Death

A great light was quenched when Principal Denney died before his span of life had been nearly filled out. I can remember his meteoric career at Glasgow University, where he was academically my junior, though not chronologically—how he strode on from triumph to triumph; and how rumour (quite falsely, I believe) insisted on the prodigiously long hours of study which were supposed to have made his triumphs possible.

A more deeply-marked impression of him was due to the appearance of his critique upon Professor Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. As will be remembered, Drummond's book enjoyed a sensational success. The charm of its style and of the author's spirit carried off for the moment the thinness of its thinking and masked the reactionary character of its conclusions. Denney's pamphlet showed not inferior grace of style, along with the

polemical vigour which he had always at command. It was anonymous. He named himself on the title-page simply "A Brother of the Natural Man"—not the character in which we knew him best.

Then followed the prolonged phase in which his polemical talent was enlisted in defence of a somewhat hard dogmatic evangelicalism. Those who knew the man best inform us that there was always a strain of radicalism visible at certain points of his system. But, judging him by his printed utterances, one received the impression that very little more would make him the leader of obscurantist reaction in Scotland. In particular, he seemed to be identifying himself even vehemently with the penal theory of Atonement. Others as well as Professor Stevens felt surprise when Denney began to modify, to qualify his statements, to explain that his real meaning was different. Plainly, even that vigorous and self-confident mind was moving towards "something truer and deeper."

One was inclined to think that his transference from a chair of Dogmatic to a chair of New Testament was extremely wholesome for such a mind. At any rate, the modifications became more marked, and in his posthumous volume he has left us—as more than one has expressed it to me—an unexpectedly "mellow"

utterance on the great theme. Even higher praise would not be excessive. Whether one agrees with the writer at all points or perhaps only at a few, one is conscious that his last is a very Christian book. That surely is high praise for a theological treatise—that it does not merely develop "good and necessary consequences" from a few authoritative principles, but contains what could only have been written with the eye on the object all the time; the Object being Christ and the eye being faith. Too many theological books are of a different order; but one thanks God for a goodly and growing number, whose authors might say, "I believed and therefore have I spoken."

Denney had already repudiated "forensic" or "legal" or "juridical"[1] views of Atonement. One must press the question, Is the death of Christ penal or is it not? The posthumous volume[2] answers, "In one sense" it is, but "not in another." If we are to reach closer knowledge of Denney's mind, we must approach the subject differently.

We may do best if we consider the extreme importance which Denney attaches to the physical death of our Lord. The whole procedure is dogmatic in the sense in which dogmatic

[1] Cf. Stevens, *Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, p. 196.
[2] *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 273.

treatment is contrasted with experimental. Those who knew Denney well assure us that this was as constant an element in his thinking, even in his most radical moods, as emancipation from the accepted Christology was, even in his most conservative moods. Of course Denney would not sanction our signalizing his special interest in Christ's physical death. He insists that, as life, sufferings and ultimate death are a unity in Christ, sacredly significant to God and man, so the physical and the spiritual experiences of death interpenetrated for Him and must not be separated in our view of His work. And that may very well be the ultimate truth; but, if we are to appreciate Denney's special contention, we must provisionally draw the distinction. We desire to learn his innermost thought, and this track seems our most promising way of access. So we ask, Why are we to insist so strongly upon death as such?

In Gen. xxii. Abraham is held to have made his sacrifice though he never plunged the knife into the living body of his son. The sacrifice, as Frederick Robertson insists, is accomplished in the region of will.[1] The

[1] Comp. also M'Leod Campbell, *Nature of Atonement*, p. 257, 5th ed.

Divine voice itself in the story comments, "Thou hast not spared[1] thine own son." Will and intention had paid their uttermost, though the dreadful act was never done. If the God who was held to have saved Abraham's son from impending death had been pleased to snatch away Christ after the last of His sufferings and before life had fled, we may affirm that the moral content of Christ's gift would have been unaltered. Doubtless it was well that the "loving wisdom of our God" ordered things differently. All moral continuity must have been set aside had Christ suffered but not died. When the apostle applies to God Himself the tribute which the Divine voice in Genesis pays to Abraham—when God is characterized as "He that spared not His own Son"—physical death is included, not excluded. But the gift of the Father and the self-surrender of the Son are surely not confined to this climax. That the bare event of death, in contrast with the willing acceptance of the decree ordaining death, makes a difference in the book-keeping of heaven—nay, that it makes so vast and decisive a difference that, when death has supervened, God is glorified and man is redeemed, but that, had physical death not occurred, man had not been redeemed nor yet God glorified—

[1] So LXX; A.V. "withheld."

so Dr. Denney's theology seems to affirm. Who can credit it?

Denney insists that we cannot separate physical death from its spiritual meanings. In certain cases, at least, the separation is plain. If life ends in unconsciousness, physical death when it occurs is a mere natural event without moral significance. Should consciousness return even in a gleam, there may be something more to do or to bear in accordance with the will of God. But, if thought has been finally extinguished in this world, it can be no gain to God that the physical basis of life upon earth, whether in Christ or in any good man, or perhaps even in a bad man, is destroyed by the stroke of death. This, however, does not apply directly to the case of our Lord. He chose to suffer to the end, and to die with an unclouded mind. "When He had tasted" the stupefying potion offered to those crucified, in a first faint effort at mercy, "He would not drink."

But again, if physical death should be induced by extreme agony of pain; if the tortured forces of life succumb, and consciousness and the physical rhythms cease together—that also, we say, is a natural rather than a moral event. Resignation to God's will is a sacrifice; extinction of life is none. Fighters in the tournaments of chivalry were wont to deal

the conquered man, tormented with pain and shame, what was termed the *coup de grâce.* More truly may nature be said to deal the *coup de grâce* when life and pain cease together. This, we may well hold, befell the physical life of Jesus, though old-fashioned orthodoxy found it necessary to teach that Jesus even on the cross was physically immortal had He not "dismissed" His own spirit. We repeat it: The book-keeping of heaven cannot have stood to gain its decisive profit from the fact that Jesus, worn out by pain of body and mind, "gave up the ghost."

Dr. Denney supports his view of the *quasi*-penal significance of death by alleging the "reaction" of nature against sin in other and lesser ways. His quotation about the boy Wordsworth's menacing vision of Langdale Pikes is pretty, but hardly strong enough to bear the weight of so massive a structure. Every student of Bishop Butler will agree that, mixed up and half concealed among other processes, there is within our present experience a certain reaction of nature and of society against moral evil. Are we not in danger of pressing this too far when we concentrate the assertion upon physical nature, and try to erect upon that basis our doctrine of Atonement?

Hesitation deepens when we consider a form of words repeatedly employed by Denney. He sees in atoning sufferings "the sin-bearing love of God." The Bible nowhere uses such terms, and what is non-Biblical needs defence and explanation in such central regions as this. Does the phrase echo Bushnell's thought of a suffering God? In words it does so; in thought it hardly can. Denney is concerned with the cross of Calvary, not with supposed sufferings of the heart of God in heaven.

Striking out that interpretation as false, one feels that Denney, like many other theologians, is in danger of proving "crypto-dualistic." God makes Himself subject to a constitution of things under which sin involves suffering. Do such words and thoughts keep in full view the truth that things physical and things moral owe their constitution to the will of God? Are we still to be told that the nature of things has to be bought off before the supreme love can assert itself? With all his capacity for clear-cut thinking, Denney seems to have stopped half-way in his great task.[1]

Another defence against criticisms passed on Denney may be found in the Pauline thesis that death — including almost pre-eminently

[1] There is a certain echo of Dale's position "He bore instead of inflicting the penalty." But this is not put with definiteness.

physical death—is the penalty of sin. This carries us back beyond Paul to the earliest chapters of the Bible. Not much, we believe, can be made of the grand old myth as it stands in Gen. iii. Denney assures us that that chapter is concerned less with the origin of death than with the origin of sin. Unfortunately, it seems tolerably plain that such an assertion precisely inverts the truth. It was not sin *qua* sin, and it was death *qua* death, which led the early Hebrew mind to utter itself in that impressive if childlike narrative. We may value the story as a testimony to the unnaturalness of death in human experience. A thing so shocking can, according to the unconscious poet who speaks to us in this ancient tale, only be explained by some primeval crime. St. Paul inherited this tale shaped into a dogma by Judaism—whether as the dogma of a Fall or of an inherent human taint. He brought this belief with him into Christianity. It had previously caused him indignantly to reject Jesus, as one who had endured the death-curse, and had endured it in that extremest form which befitted a false Messiah. And probably this dogma determined also the primary term of Paul's Christian faith in Atonement, viz., that the death penalty and the curse of the cross were *vicariously* endured by Jesus the Christ.

But this is far from being all that St. Paul has to say about Atonement. Some things which he has to say are more directly shaped by his Christian life. We have died with Christ. We are risen with Him. These affirmations, we dare to affirm, pierce deeper into the abiding elements of our faith. Paul adds yet other statements; among these, statements which gave dangerous encouragement to the mythological speculation about the devil's rights and about the trick played on Satan.

Physically, death can scarcely now be regarded as the effect of sin. Whatever force a theologian may put upon his thoughts, that belief in the long run will prove impossible henceforward for men of honest and open mind. The belief may perhaps record an early impression made upon the groping conscience of primitive man. Death is the extreme penalty of deliberate wickedness; and here is a race every member of which is doomed to it—by violence or by lapse of time.

> *Nunquam* antecedentem scelestum
> Deseruit pede Pœna claudo.

Or, as we said, the belief may have arisen as an expression of the sense of the unnaturalness of death. Well might human love protest to its God that He ought never to have made

us, or, if He made us at all, ought not to have put us in subjection to such a doom of silent separation—unless it is sin that blinds our vision to the glory of the death of God's friends. Terrible is the appointment of Divine providence by which the body which was so sacred and so precious becomes the prey of corruption, and we must "bury our dead out of our sight." It wears the aspect of Divine contempt or mockery. "And yet"—as Browning's crazy lover puts it, after his crime—"and yet God has not said one word." That which was so intimate a part of the personality we loved—of the personality which God loved—is thrust down into the rank of things, and of things unclean.

The dogmatic mind may elucidate this familiar but ever fresh tragedy by explaining that the wages of sin are being paid in rich though by no means in full measure. And it must be true that there is a moral meaning in what we suffer, and a moral necessity; but hardly a penal necessity; and hardly even the vaguer half-penal necessity for which Dr. Denney's last book pleads.

When death approaches, as it were, by inches—when long illness or extreme age withdraws the soul of the dying step by step from participation in the loves and cares of earth,

and concentrates it (as we must trust) on preparation for the mystery that is coming upon it—then the element of shock in bereavement is minimized; then the physical death of our beloved seems less terrible. There are even occasions when we may welcome for them nature's *coup de grâce.* But, if death were always of the type of "Der Tod als Freund,"[1] we can hardly think that the purpose of God's moral discipline of our race could be fully accomplished. Those who die young and vigorous and full of promise are in a peculiar sense witnesses to immortality.

We have spoken above of the silence of God when our hearts are agonized by loss. We spoke according to the appearance of things —not according to the inward reality of a Christian's life. Even St. Paul, that great New Testament dogmatist, came to hold other thoughts regarding a Christian's death than those which make death penal. "Neither death nor life shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ." "All things are yours, if you are Christ's; life itself; death itself." "To me, to live is Christ; and to die is—gain."

There the Christian heart and life speak in Paul—no inherited Jewish dogma. Can

[1] Death as friend.

death be the wages of sin if it is God's gift to us? If it is gain? And, if the death of Christ's redeemed has this new quality, need or can the death of their Redeemer be *penal*? Not easily did He save. Not lightly did He lay down His life. Not a small obligation do we owe to Him who makes it possible for us to die in the sunshine of God's love. And yet we believe that, for Him also, physical death itself, the earthly end of all, was escape, was release, and was not penalty; and that God gives us the victory even over death because Christ who died for us died as a conqueror.

We are forced, then, to the unsought conclusion that, while the sufferings of Christ are morally necessitated, the actual dying of Christ —so far as we can treat it separately—is congruous to His vocation but not so stringently necessary. Assuredly Christ's death is fittingly included in His destiny as the Saviour. We may say with all reverence that nothing had been gained if God had interposed between Jesus and physical death. Abraham's son in the Old Hebrew legend had life before him, and earthly promises to inherit. Christ's earthly task was finished. The children were partakers of flesh and blood, and of the doom of death; whatever the reality had been, it

must have seemed to "the children" as if the Head and the members, the First-born and the younger brethren, were being treated on differing principles had Christ not literally died. More even than that. God had not achieved our salvation by purely moral forces if miracle had been thrust in between the dying Saviour and the arrival of death itself. The line between the last pang of suffering and the advent of death is in His case imaginary. Suffering accompanied Him in its fullest moral significance to the very end. "He poured out His soul unto death."

If with Principal Franks we are to distinguish between Christ's "Passion" or sufferings and His death—Denney seems to hold similar language—then our thesis must be that we are saved by the Passion; or by the life, culminating in the Passion; and by the death of Christ only in a wider sense as the crowning-point in self-dedication to God's glory and to man's redemption. To Him as to His people the drawing of the last breath meant escape and release; to Him in fullest measure it meant victory; if also in very deed it "made the sacrifice complete."

CHAPTER XVII

Epilogue—A Tentative Construction on Atonement

Our task has been brought to an end. It was our intention to review all well-defined theories of the Christian Atonement and seek to ascertain their precise meaning. Inevitably criticisms were offered; and if criticisms are to be anything better than sophistries, clever or dull, they imply a definite point of view and even (could it be worked out) a system. To work out such a system is altogether beyond our powers. And yet, if we stopped short at the present point, our investigation must appear a painfully broken thing. For that reason the writer has felt it necessary to make some effort at the briefest of positive statements. What he is to outline will be merely of the nature of suggestion. Should it contribute anything whatever towards the definition and defence of Christian truth, the writer would be most thankful. He frankly admits that he may possibly be asking his readers to start upon wrong lines.

Our test of theories, applied pretty steadily

throughout, was their success, or their partial success, or their failure, in detecting behind the sufferings of our Lord a true moral necessity. One might have divided theories according as they conceived the Atonement as determined primarily by the glory of God or primarily by the requirements of human salvation. Historically—rightly or wrongly—this division of competing theories has pretty well coincided with another. We obtain practically the same grouping of past theories when we contrast those which interpret the Atonement as making forgiveness possible with those more subjective theories which interpret it as the presupposition of the new divine life in the soul of man and in the world. It will be observed that we have spoken of theories which regard the Atonement as making forgiveness "possible." That point of view we find to be inherent in almost all the historical "objective" theories, and—as we venture to think—it marks one great deficiency. Again and again we have repudiated the conception of Atonement as the removal of a preliminary barrier to the execution of God's purpose. Whatever the Atonement means, it must include more than that. It will involve the necessary accomplishment, and in some true sense the full accomplishment, of God's purpose of grace.

In view of the comparative failure of the more ambitious historic theories, the suggestion is now to be advanced that Christian faith will do well to seek for light upon this great mystery of godliness by studying Atonement *as the presupposition of the redemption of human character.* It is true that the average Moral Influence theory has seemed to us to lack any sure hold upon the conception of moral necessity. Such theories enumerate psychological forces tending towards what is good; the necessary presuppositions of human goodness they have not discovered in the Atonement, nor have they been able to find in it the sure promise of Divine success. These elements, however, we recognize, though in obscure outline, in what is known as the mystical doctrine of St. Paul. We perceive the same elements, coherent but bizarre, in the theory of "redemption by sample." Can our interpretation offer at least the suggestion of something more definite than that one rich vein of the great apostle's thought, and of something worthier and more credible than the doctrine of the school of Menken? With this statement of the question it seems well to begin, though we consciously regard it as a mere experiment. And we do not believe that it will be possible to construct even the

slenderest scheme of a doctrine of Atonement without appealing to other necessities besides those contained within human nature.

The age in which we live is extremely practical. No theory, religious or social, is heard with any patience unless the claim can be advanced that it "works." If it can be shown—within those limits of proof which the nature of our subject prescribes—that the cross of Christ exhibits the power and wisdom of God in healing the wounds of man's moral nature, we may claim from the spirit of our age some measure at least of respectful attention for the ancient gospel of the grace of God. Yet it would not be well to insist too strongly upon this seeming advantage in our proposed line of approach. What is in fashion with the *Zeitgeist* to-day may be hopelessly out of fashion to-morrow. Nor is it certain that the doctrinal allegation—Christ does for the soul of man what no other in heaven or earth can do—will necessarily lead to better results in character than, *e.g.*, obsolete penal doctrines. Better theory does not necessarily guarantee better practice; nor is it always when we are thinking about ourselves that our characters make most advance in strength or in purity. He who strives to do his duty; who puts his trust in God; who looks away from his own limitations,

perplexities, and terrors to fasten his eyes upon Christ—that man grows in grace more than those who are perpetually taking their soul's temperature, or polishing their virtuous interiors. Yet this also is only half a truth. Self-examination and watchfulness are abiding elements of the Christian life. There is less need than ever to disparage these things to-day, in an easy-going age like ours. Something, then, we must learn even in the study of Atonement by inquiring how it tells verifiably upon human character and conduct—something, though not everything.

I

Accordingly, we begin our search for light upon the moral necessity of Christ's sufferings by affirming that His suffering righteousness delivers those who trust Him from the bondage of sin and ensures their conformity to the will of God; and further by affirming that nothing else could have exercised the same powers. This involves the assertion—against Ritschl—that love to God and love to men are not two different things, held together by an external bond, but one thing with diverse expressions. There is also implied the assumption that, in every manifestation of Christian life and character, there is a practical rightness and

meetness, and the fulfilment of an obligation incumbent upon us as a duty. Whatever more the Christian scheme may include, it must reveal itself as a power for the promotion of human goodness. It will be true—in the pared-down modernizing phrase of *Ecce Homo* —that, if the Church's *raison d'être* is the doing of God's will on earth as it is done in heaven, the Church may be defined as "a society for the improvement of morality." It must be found that this practical purpose of making man like God is promoted by every atom and fragment of Christian experience. Such experience includes other aspects, but that element cannot be missing. And so we assert that, in the nature of moral things, man could be redeemed by fellowship with the Christ who suffered, and that he could in no other way be redeemed from the power of evil.

Incidentally, this way of approach solves—unless it can be shown merely to *evade*—the difficulty of holding that God both requires and provides Atonement. If Atonement is the price of forgiveness, and if forgiveness is only thinkable as the expression of love, does not Christian belief argue in a circle? Whereas, if Atonement is the necessary and inevitable means for rescuing man's character, and if God loves us, then love chooses this means in

spite of its immense cost. The difficulty—the fear of intellectual incoherence—seems to have vanished.

We cannot absolutely show how the suffering innocence of Christ as the culmination of His fellowship with His human brethren should rescue from sin in the decisive fashion in which our Christian faith affirms such rescue. We can never rival the *pseudo*-clearness of the penal doctrine. There had to be punishment, and Christ has been "punished" for us. Possibly a new danger will arise. The mystical doctrine may prove a misty doctrine; and the very centre of our conviction may be tainted with obscurity and consequent uncertainty. Yet certain parts of the subject are fully clear. On the one side, it is clear that Christ has reached the utmost point in the way of fidelity to God and of self-sacrificing love for man. His death expresses in brief intensity what all His life exhibits. There is, if we may say it, the supreme *development* of goodness *in Him* when He suffers even to death. He becomes able to rescue to the very uttermost because He has done and has suffered to the very uttermost.

We are not to understand this statement quantitatively. There is no arithmetical "uttermost" short of what is called infinity. If there

were three hours of darkness for the Crucified One, irreverence may always ask, Why not thirteen? Why not thirty? Such questions would be as foolish as they are unseemly. Christ was *faithful unto death* — with clear consciousness of every pang, and under conditions of the utmost conceivable significance. Greater loyalty to God, greater love for man, hath no one; nor could have.

It is easier to establish qualitative and quantitative superiority in Christ over lesser good men than to establish the same for the Christian life in comparison with lesser good lives. Nevertheless, the two assertions fit together and support each other. If Christ is supreme and unique in His saving power, so is the life He imparts a unique thing. It is matter not merely of doctrinal assertion but of universal Christian experience that life in the fellowship of Christ is a different thing from life elsewhere. Sinlessness is not communicated to us; at least not here and now. Or at the very least we must affirm that the distinctive Christian experience can exist in those who are entirely aware that they have not yet attained and are not already perfect. In spite of which they can testify that there is a new creation; that old things are passed away; that all things are made new; that all things are of God. The

heart that formerly could not wish to be different from what it was melts in the fellowship of Christ, and repents. The heart that formerly wished to do better but was dogged by failure at every turn now finds its previously ineffectual repentance suffused with infinite hope. Nothing so humbles a man as the knowledge of a love utterly out of proportion to his best deserts. Nothing so tunes life to the chord of thankfulness and praise. And we have caught glimpses of such a life! That, we know, is what a Christian's life truly is, and what our own life must be and should be.

In such qualitative fashion, not in mere quantitative superiority, the life that is in Christ differs from the life which owns no conscious dependence upon the Saviour of men. The Christian experience is more humble, more thankful, more hopeful, than any human experience apart from Christ. Life grows a diviner thing if Christ by His death has redeemed us. Earth becomes a different place, heaven a grander heaven, God a greater God. And it is an axiom of religion that the best is the truest. The world's wisdom for worldly ends rightly bids us strike a middle course between excessive hopes and undue fears; but faith is optimistic or it is nothing.

II

Another line of explanation for the necessity of the work and sufferings of Christ is that they were required for and that they secured the supreme glory of God. Not—we venture to think—that God, because of His penal justice, must needs be glorified in a preliminary undertaking before man could be saved. Not that "Man is saved and *yet* God's honour stands fast." Rather, God is supremely glorified in the fact that man is redeemed.

On the other hand, the new affirmation adds something. It will not do for us to conceive of God as only a means to human happiness or even to human holiness. It is true; God is love; and therefore God *is* such a means. It is most true that we must find our happiness and our holiness in God, or miss them eternally. But it is most untrue that God is only a moral means while man is a moral end. Nearer the truth would it be to invert that statement; since God stands for no private and particular interests, such as Anselm's theory imputes to Him, but for righteousness *qua* righteousness and for love *qua* love. Yet we should be recoiling too far from unseemly error if we actually treated man as no more than a moral means, or wished man so to regard himself. "Behold, what

manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; and such we are." "And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life."

We concede, we insist upon, these truths. And yet our interpretation of Atonement cannot be merely subjective. If we are to do justice to the mind that was in Christ, we must advance from the thought of that which was necessary for the redemption of human character to the thought of that which was necessary for the manifestation and realization of God's glory. With Christ, God always came first. And therefore, with Christ, man's claim always came immediately second to that of God. We also must learn of Him, till we can establish the same order in our lives and the same sure sequence. God always first: man always second —second only to God. As Christ loved God with all His heart and soul, so can we and so must we. And if Christ loved His brethren as the sons of His Father in heaven, we must love them both as the sons of God and as the brethren of Christ. And with us as with Him love must be no mere emotion, but also a victoriously strong principle.

But why is God glorified in a *suffering* Christ? The ruling doctrinal tradition seeks to enforce the analogy of punishment for sin;

indeed, it seeks to advance from analogy to identity. We shall do far better to press the analogy of repentance, as in the theory which found its noblest exponent in M'Leod Campbell. Whether the phraseology which imputes to our Lord "repentance" is correct or is verbally incorrect, there is found in Him under His sufferings that right human attitude towards the God of holiness and of salvation which is required by the moral nature of things—an attitude which passes from Him into us; which in Him and even in us pleases God.

Of course there remains a point raised by Denney. Moberly speaks much of penitence, and so does the New Testament; but then the New Testament speaks far, far more of faith. Denney even gives figures in support of this statement—a procedure which suggests other circles of piety than those which work at scientific theology. Still, the fact remains in its significance, and the figures are doubtless trustworthy. I cannot pretend to explore the implications of the fact to which Denney calls our attention, though I believe it carries us very far. Repentance is right; desirable; necessary; altogether blessed, however sad. (And no one can say in advance how much conscious sadness repentance must contain, or how long such sadness must endure. That is a

matter between the penitent and his God.) But God's supreme demand is faith. We must trust Him. Does not that mean—does not that fact almost tell us plainly—that "God is the Father of our spirits" and that His Father's Lord is "the ultimate truth on which our faith must rest"?

III

A third way of seeking to explain Christ's saving sufferings is by reference to an external moral nature-of-things, not as embodied in man's constitution, but as prior to that, though helping to determine that constitution as well as all other things God has made.

Is this crypto-dualistic? To make *law* supreme—even "moral law"—may deserve that censure. But God, the true God, is law and love in one. What Dale said[1] with fine eloquence of law, being "*alive* in God—it reigns on His throne, sways His sceptre, is crowned with His glory"—we must say indeed of law, but still more emphatically of love. Therefore eternal and immutable righteousness is no limitation upon God; it is the self of His self, the heart of His heart, the soul of His soul. It is true that His will is over all things, but assuredly it is not true that right and wrong are constituted by Divine fiat. His will affirms

[1] *The Atonement*, p. 431, 25th ed.

righteousness and love—in His decree for us and for other reasonable and moral beings; in His every act; in His purpose that sin shall not go unpunished, but still more that redemption shall triumph.

If, then, God calls into existence creatures to whom He assigns the rank of moral beings, He necessarily calls them to the recognition of righteousness and to the practice of love. And this further "necessity" is as far as possible from being a limitation upon the Divine freedom. Freedom, in a God of holiness, to create rational beings who shall *not* be under the law of righteousness and love, is a meaningless thing, or else is a blasphemy. The true freedom of our God is *in* His righteousness and *in* His love. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne; mercy and truth go before His face." In that true freedom He eternally dwells, and we must come to dwell in it as His guests—no! rather as His *sons*. If, then, He redeems sinners—as He must, if or so long as they are redeemable, and if He is God indeed—He follows necessary moral means to this moral end, even when these means involve Gethsemane and Calvary. God may if He pleases work miracles in the region of physical law, but redemption by non-moral means would not be redemption

at all. Therefore we have been bought—at so great and costly a price.)

It was hinted above in Chapter XII. that M'Leod Campbell treats the Atonement as "a development of the Incarnation," *i.e.* he advances to the study of Christ's work with the preliminary certainty, especially as taught by St. Paul, that Christ is in the fullest sense Divine.[1] Is not this a mistake? The Christ of history assuredly did not present Himself to disciples with a preliminary demand that they should admit His Divine glory. They began, and we may begin, with simple discipleship to the best of Masters. A higher confession of faith dawns upon us in the knowledge of His redeeming love. We cannot define to ourselves the supreme vocation of the world's Redeemer, and yet hold that God entrusted that vocation to any Being who, however high in dignity, was not truly Divine. Or, more briefly: Christ who does the divinest thing of all, in glorifying God and in redeeming mankind, shows Himself for what He is in what He does.

It is better to have a bad creed and a good

[1] St. Paul's real view is hardly so emphatic. Christ's being falls, for St. Paul's thought, within the reign of Deity; He is pre-existent and creative; but He is not in an absolute sense Divine, or certainly not so till His exaltation.

life than to have a good doctrine and a bad life. Happily, there is no need to choose one at the expense of the other. God calls us to a rich inheritance. We ought to possess both creed and life as God's good gifts. Among other things, social reform will be promoted by true faith in the saving love of the dying Christ, and nothing else can render it equal service. To-day we hear not indeed too much but disproportionately much about the evil of social injustice. Christ speaks to us of deeper needs; and yet the redeeming of social wrongs is a plain part of His programme. Will not wholehearted work for such reforms, by those who are following Christ in this light, serve to commend His adorable name to the world for which He died? If we fail to play our part, then perhaps humanitarian leaders who have no sure faith in Christ will serve Him better than we. But God forbid it! By all means let them do well; it is for us to do more excellently still. God has provided some better thing for those who know and believe the love which He has towards them and towards all men—the love which sent His only Son into the world that we might live through Him. If we are humble and faithful and patient, then the day must be won, for God and for humanity, in the name of His holy Servant Jesus.

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